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ABSTRACT

This document contains 18 policy, synthesis, and analysis papers and foreign experts' contributions examining the following topics: challenges facing vocational education and training (VET) in the Czech Republic; the main aims and strategies of reforming the country's VET system; the role of VET in transforming the republic into a learning society in the Czech Republic and elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe; reform strategies and policies that have been used in the West; and the Czech Republic's policy options with regard to reform of its VET system. The following papers are included: "Education for Prosperity: Towards a Learning Society"; "Curriculum Assessment/Certification/Quality Assessment/Teacher Training" (Bohumil Janys); "Management/Financing/Social Partnership" (Jaromir Coufalik); "Legislation/Research and Development/Internationalisation" (Jan Kovarovic); "Curriculum, Assessment, and Certification" (Pavel Petrovic et al.); "Teacher Training" (Jana Svecova et al.); "Management" (Frantisek Bacik et al.); "Financing" (Igor Hartman et al.); "Legislation" (Jaromir Krejci et al.); "Social Partnership" (Jan Hrabek et al.); "Quality Assessment" (Michal Karpisek et al.); "Research and Development/Internationalisation" (Jana Hendrichova et al.); "International Developments in the Area of Curriculum Development" (David Parkes); "Assessment and Certification of Vocational Qualifications" (Olivier Bertrand); "Qualification Structure and Quality Control in Vocational Education and Training" (Ben Hovels); "Preparing Educational Leaders to Implement Reform: Lessons from Eastern Europe" (David Oldroyd); "Management of Education: An Overview of the International Context" (Gabor Halasz); "The Financing of Vocational Education and Training in

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Europe: An Examination of Recent Developments" (Jean-Pierre Jallade); and "The Involvement of Social Partners in the Development of Vocational Education and Training" (Jean-Marie Luttringer). Appendices contain a brief description of the Phare VET reform program in the Czech Republic and 161 references. (MN)

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ED 420 804

From Pilot Schools to Reform Strategy

Outcomes of the Phare Programme Reform of Vocational Education and Training

European Training Foundation

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POLICY PAPER

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EDUCATION FOR PROSPERITY

Towards a Learning Society

INTRODUCTION

The Czech VET system has undergone considerable changes in the first half of the 90s, following the changes in the political, social and economic environment. Curricula have been adapted to developments in the employment structure; the provision of vocational education has been extended by the introduction of new types and levels of vocational schools and new fields of education. These changes have contributed to a considerable modernisation of vocational education and training.

There have been further changes in the Czech VET system. Mechanisms of decision-making have been adjusted increasing the competencies and responsibilities of school directors and teachers. A number of competencies have been transferred from the national to the district level. There has been a radical shift in student numbers away from apprenticeship schools towards technical schools. The gap between secondary and higher education has been filled by the establishment of higher vocational schools. These type of changes can be regarded as structural changes. However, other types of structural changes, although prepared and discussed, such as for example national standards or the transfer from external to internal control mechanisms, have not yet been implemented.

Apart from modernisation and structural change, the Czech VET system has also gone through a certain degree of systemic reform. It has been forced to adapt to the demands of a changing social and economic system and to change the inner logic of vocational education and training. While VET was previously characterised by rigidly preparing for guaranteed and stable employment, it now has to prepare for an uncertain and unstable labour market. VET itself has to become flexible in order to contribute to employment stabilisation. Systemic reform involves further organisational and institutional changes, especially with respect to governance and administration, and requires an effective communication between VET and the labour market. It also implies changes in attitudes and behaviour of people and institutions engaged in VET and employment.

This report is the final outcome of a unique project. A team of some 40 Czech vocational education experts has jointly undertaken an evaluation of the results of the Phare VET reform programme, in which 19 pilot vocational schools from all over the country have participated since 1993/1994. The team has analysed the experiences made in the pilot schools against the background of the strategic discussions about the future development of vocational education held in the Czech Republic since the early 1990s. The findings of the team have been written down in a series of reports and discussed with experts of EU member states. On the basis of these detailed reports, three synthetic papers have been prepared bringing cohesion into the various findings and conclusions. This final report draws on these synthetic papers, summarises them and proposes a comprehensive, future-oriented policy programme.

Representing a dominant sector of secondary education, the VET system plays a key role in the Czech educational system. The Phare program was aimed at reform of initial vocational education for youth and, therefore, we had to leave other areas of vocational

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education, such as training and retraining of adults, as well as the sector of general education aside. However, as we will argue in more detail in the section on lifelong learning, one can no longer isolate separate sectors of the educational system. In a next stage, it will therefore be necessary to place initial VET policies for youth within an overall educational strategy for all citizens.

It should be stressed that this document is NOT a political programme per se. It rather provides an agenda for policy making, the political feasibility of which still is to be defined. Its basic intention is to initiate a – long due and most imperative – comprehensive and open policy debate about the future of vocational education and training. In fact, the evaluation of the Phare programme has been from the start a conscious attempt to commence a process of strategic thinking and consensus building among major stakeholders in the Czech VET system.

The many changes that have taken place within a relatively short historical period testify the flexibility of Czech society and its people to adapt to new circumstances. However, there is no reason to feel self-satisfied. Quality education will increasingly become a condition for economic and social prosperity. It will therefore be necessary to proceed further, to face the challenges of the future and to prepare the next phase of transformation of the vocational education and training system as part of a strategy for the development of lifelong learning for all.

1. THE CHALLENGES

If the Czech VET system is to meet the demanding requirements of the contemporary and future period then it must solve problems of three kinds:

☐ unsolved problems inherited from the period before 1990
☐ problems resulting from the initial transition period
☐ challenges of the future

The first type of challenges are shared by all countries of Central and Eastern Europe; the second type are to a large extend the unintended and unexpected outcome of Czech reform policies of the early 90s, while the third type of challenges are shared with all developed industrial societies. Each of these challenges is not receiving the attention that they would require.

The Pilot Schools that have participated in the Phare VET Reform Programme have achieved considerable progress during the last few years.

Pilot schools have made valuable experience with:

☐ Postponing the choice of the educational branch and type of secondary school through introducing a first common year of education

☐ Implementation of a two level curriculum
☐ Implementation of key skills in the curriculum
☐ Implementation of the project approach in education
☐ Introduction of module-based teaching
☐ Improving horizontal and vertical pathways for students
☐ Cooperation with social partners at school level
☐ In-service training for headmasters and teachers
☐ Cooperation with EU schools

In total, more than 800 educators have been involved and some 15000 students have been educated according to these educational principles.

But also other schools, not directly participating in the Phare Programme have not stood still. All this experience forms an excellent basis for the development of national policies needed for a successful coping with the challenges that the Czech VET system is facing.

The originality of the present situation lies in the fact that – on the one hand – there exists an accumulation of problems that urgently needs to be solved if the quality of Czech vocational education is not to be jeopardised, while – on the other hand – a lot of work has already been done that would allow to envisage solutions for these problems. It will be important to build on all these achievements and experience. It will also be important not to loose the momentum that has been created by the experimental changes in schools. This extraordinary chance should not be wasted.

Unsolved problems inherited from the period before 1990

☐ too centralised management (1)
☐ limited horizontal and vertical permeability of the VET system(2)
☐ excessive specialisation of educational programmes (3)
☐ legislation that does not foster continuous modernisation of VET (4)
☐ mutual isolation of initial and further vocational education and training (5)

Problems resulting from the initial transition period in the 90s

☐ low degree of participation of social partners (6)
☐ increased streaming at lower secondary level and decreasing interest for vocational education (7)
☐ fragmentation of educational programs (8)
☐ an insufficiently effective network of VET schools (9)
☐ insufficient relevance of the VET system for the labour market (10)
☐ unsustainable financing of initial VET from public resources (11)
☐ insufficient investment in VET (12)
☐ insufficient quality control of VET (13)
☐ absence of a system of in-service school management and teacher training (14)

Challenges of the future

During the coming period, a series of additional challenges for the VET system will result in particular from three important developments: Firstly, there will be the need to adjust a national VET system that has so far been characteristic of the Czech Republic to a system that is compatible with VET systems in the European Union; secondly, it will become necessary to transform a VET system that has been designed for an Industrial Society into a system that can deal with the requirements of the Information Society; and thirdly, there will be the need for changing a policy of reacting to ad-hoc problems into one that focuses on strategic changes and continuous innovation.

From a national Czech VET system towards an EU compatible system

This transition will require to:

☐ develop and introduce a system of educational standards, qualifications, accreditation of educational programmes and certification, allowing for transparency and compatibility (15)
☐ develop and introduce an integral system of social partnership in VET (16)
☐ move some of the competencies in VET from the national to the regional and local level (17)

From a VET system designed for an industrial society towards VET for an information society

This transition would require increased attention for:

☐ the transition from knowledge-based learning towards learning ways of solving problems (18)
☐ incorporating of information and communication technologies in contents and methods of VET (19)
☐ increased access to tertiary education (20)
☐ promoting and improving access to life-long learning (21)

From an ad-hoc crisis policy towards a capacity for continuous strategic change and innovation

This transformation would require acknowledgement of the need to:

☐ develop basic consensus among stakeholders about the future of VET (22)
☐ develop a non-governmental body for the development of strategic VET policy (23)

❑ innovate laws and other regulations that would enable a continuous innovation of VET (24)
❑ strengthen the role of monitoring, evaluation and research of VET (25)

The formidable task of present policy-making will be to seek for combined solutions for the three different types of challenges. They must assist in solving urgent problems of today but do so within a clear future oriented perspective. The a. m. problems must be solved as a whole, because only this way it is possible to use the links between them an to propose a comprehensive set of activities. The search for such a comprehensive approach should be at the heart of coming debates about VET policy in the Czech Republic. It is towards this aim that this document intends to contribute.

2. MAIN REFORM AIMS

The evaluation of the Phare VET Reform Programme pilot school experience in the light of future challenges and the critical review of policy discussions held so far, leads us to propose nine strategic aims. Taken together, they may provide solutions for the 25 tasks and problems that have been identified.

1. Increase public interest and participation in discussions
2. Improve access to life-long learning for all
3. Develop mechanisms for the continuous development of quality contents
4. Develop quality control instruments and mechanisms
5. Improve staff development for teachers and administrators
6. Improve VET management
7. Innovate VET financing
8. Innovate VET legislation
9. Create capacities for continuous innovation

In the following chapter these strategic aims for VET reform will be clarified more in detail. We shall briefly indicate the major obstacles and barriers for realising them and propose a series of concrete actions to improve the situation. The order in which the aims follow does not correspond to the degree of their importance but they are interrelated. We strongly feel that progress can be achieved only in case the efforts are focused on all nine aims simultaneously. In the final chapter we shall then propose a more comprehensive policy approach and a timetable.

3. AIMS AND SOLUTIONS

Aim 1. Increase public interest of and participation in discussions

BACKGROUND

If there is one thing to be learned from international discussions and developments, it is the awareness that education, and especially vocational education, will be one of the key factors determining our future well-being and prosperity. It will also be a key policy area to secure a high level of social and political cohesion in society.

Only a few policy-makers and general public representatives are aware of the fact that the future of Czech society and of each of its citizens will be increasingly dependent on education and training. VET reform requires a high level of participation and support from the general public, not only of the educational community.
A further key obstacle for reform, is to be found in the lack of democratic procedures essential for achieving agreement on a future development of the system. The absence of such well-established procedures makes it very difficult in particular to achieve:

- ☐ transparency and legitimacy of the whole process of decision making
- ☐ genuine participation of all partners
- ☐ respecting the various specific legitimate concerns and relations
- ☐ consensus building
- ☐ differentiating between professional and political dimensions of problems
- ☐ developing a shared view, strategy and policies

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

A vigorous attempt will have to be made, therefore, to involve all major actors in Czech society in a debate about the future of VET and about the role of each of the actors in it. By being involved in the debate, actors will also develop an understanding of their new roles and resume responsibility

We recommend:

- ☐ To initiate a national debate on the future of vocational education and training and to involve the mass media in popularising key issues of vocational education policy.
- ☐ The establishment of a National Council for VET. The Council would be a body where all major partners, namely relevant ministries, trade unions, associations of employers and possibly other institutions would be represented.
- ☐ That the Council consults and negotiates projects on VET policy for the nearest future. The Council would provide a platform for the representation of different interests and points of view. Not being involved in administrative tasks like ministerial departments would allow it to deal with a broader spectrum of problems that go well beyond the school framework. It would also be able to contribute to a more strategically oriented VET policy and be better positioned to take up the demands arising from integration of the Czech Republic into the EU.

☐ To support and further stimulate the dissemination of the results of international discussions and VET policies to the wider public of educators, administrators, social partners, parents and students.

These measures could contribute to the solution of issues 5, 6, 7, 10, 16, 21, 22, 23

Aim 2. Improve access to lifelong learning for all

BACKGROUND

Lifelong learning implies a commitment to new system-wide goals, standards and approaches that go far beyond the confines of vocational education and training as such, the principle strategic perspective is also valid for the VET system.

The basic idea underpinning "lifelong learning for all" is that everyone should be able, motivated and actively encouraged to learn throughout life. "This view of learning embraces individual and social development of all kinds and in all settings - formally, in schools, vocational, tertiary and adult education institutions, and non-formally, at home, at work and in the community. The approach is system-wide; it focuses on the standards of knowledge and skills needed by all, regardless of age. It emphasises the need to prepare and motivate all children at an early age for learning over a lifetime, and directs effort to ensure that all adults, employed and unemployed, who need to retrain or upgrade their skills, are provided with opportunities to do so" (OECD, 1997, page 15).

One of the main obstacles at present for developing lifelong learning for all is the extreme segmentation of the Czech educational system and the restricted access to post secondary education for both graduates of secondary vocational and secondary general schools. Moreover, only those qualifications are recognised (within the education system and on the labour market), which have been achieved through formal education.

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

It will be necessary to rethink and to transform the whole education system along the principles of lifelong learning, but there are some measures which can be recommended to be made for initial vocational education and training already now:

☐ to integrate further vocational education much better in the overall education system
☐ to improve the transition from schooling to working life
☐ to integrate initial vocational education for youth with vocational training for adults (employed and unemployed), and
☐ to allow for the recognition of experiences and skills gained outside the formal education system

More specifically, we would recommend to:

- ☐ Review the experiences made with integrated schools and create conditions for their expansion, eventually including under one roof secondary general, vocational and technical schools.
- ☐ Increase the range of options available after compulsory education, especially in upper secondary and the first years of tertiary education, for graduates of secondary general, vocational and technical schools.
- ☐ Improve capacities for school and career guidance and counselling for youths and adults.
- ☐ Use a system of national qualification standards as a framework for both initial and adult vocational education and training.
- ☐ Develop more sophisticated and transparent approaches for assessing and recognising competencies, including those acquired outside formal education institutions.

These measures could contribute to the solution of issues 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 15, 20, 21

Aim 3. Develop mechanisms for the continuous development of quality contents

BACKGROUND

The previous system of centralised and unified curriculum contents has been followed by a radically decentralised and free curriculum development without any accepted steering from the national level. This has resulted in a non-transparent situation in which it is difficult, if not impossible, to ensure comparable quality of vocational education in the country. There is at the same time a clear need for an increased diversification of educational provision.

The present methods for approval of curriculum documents are considerably inflexible. Modernisation of curricula takes place in an uncoordinated way and is mainly restricted to new emerging sectors. A considerable number of vocational schools continue to prepare students for traditional and narrow vocational and technical profiles. The present system does not allow vocational education to respond quickly to changes on the labour market and in work organisations.

Finally, there also exist considerable problems with respect to the integration of theoretical (academic and vocational) and practical subjects, which are intensified by the fact that different categories of teachers and trainers are responsible for different areas of the curriculum implementation.

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

A solution for the above problems can possibly be found by a combination of the following measures:

- ☐ Introduce a national basic curriculum, backed by an appropriate law, which would provide guaranteed integrated minimum standards of general education, basic vocational education and key skills. At the same time to offer simultaneously a high degree of freedom for individual schools to decide on specific contents of their own curriculum in accordance with specific local and regional conditions and on methods of teaching.
- ☐ Establishment of a national list of recognised training occupations which systematically groups occupational families, broad training occupations and their related occupational specialisation as they occur on the labour market. The list should also distinguish different levels of qualifications and clarify transitions from one level to another, especially from secondary to tertiary levels of education. The national list of recognised training occupations should as much as possible be based on accepted international classification systems such as ISCED and ISCO.
- ☐ Both the national core curriculum and the national list of recognised training occupations should be elaborated on the basis of clearly defined roles and responsibilities between social partners, relevant ministries and research and development institutions.

In the short term, we recommend to:

- ☐ Create a National Agency for VET, a professional body with the principal task of continuously matching qualifications as produced by the education system and as required by the labour market and their standardisation across sectors. This Agency should also secure transparency and comparability at European level.
- ☐ Introduce gradually the two-level curriculum model developed by VÚOŠ and verified at pilot schools, the first level of which is formed by an educational standard of secondary vocational education including key skills, into the whole system of initial VET.
- ☐ Finish the work that has been started by VÚOŠ on the system of core VET courses and replace the existing system of specialised courses, securing compatibility with the new curriculum model.

These measures could contribute to the solution of issues 2, 3, 8, 15

Aim 4. Develop quality control instruments and mechanisms

BACKGROUND

With the introduction of free educational choice and an open labour market, it becomes more and more important to have relevant information about the quality of vocational education, both at the level of individual schools and at the level of the system of vocational education as a whole. Funding agencies have to know what is being done with their money, students and their families have to know where to study and employers have to know the value of school graduates. This brings for educational institutions the need to control the quality of their work and to collect and provide information about it to the public.

The issue is also linked with the existing system of certifications in vocational education. In the Czech countries, the traditional certificates include the apprentice certificate and the Maturita certificate. These final certificates have proven their value in the past but tend increasingly to be too inflexible for a system of lifelong learning.

Evaluation and quality assurance are key elements in a system of steering based on the outcomes of relatively autonomous schools. Evaluation, which will have to be carried out at all levels (pupil, teacher, school, education system) will also make it possible to make comparisons in a regional and international context. The development of measures that guarantee quality and increase transparency of vocational education will become a high priority both nationally and internationally.

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

It is proposed that:

☐ A more rigorous system of accreditation of educational programmes and training providers be developed, based on the national curriculum and the list of recognised training occupations suggested in the previous section. This should be combined with elaborating an overall certification system, which integrates existing school leaving certificates into a more flexible system enabling transfers of learning achievements. The new accreditation and certification system should cover both initial vocational education and further education and training.

☐ Evaluation tools have to be developed for assessing pupil performance, educational programmes, and the working of the school. These tools should also include self-evaluation. For the development of these evaluation tools a contribution by the social partners should be secured. Evaluation results should be more widely disseminated, also to the general public.

☐ Mechanisms are introduced for monitoring and assessment of developments in initial and further education and training.

These measures could contribute to the solution of issues 5, 10, 13, 15, 21, 25

Aim 5. Improve staff development for teachers and administrators

BACKGROUND

While school reform is de facto taking place in a bottom-up way, at the initiative of individual schools, teaching staff is ill prepared for their new tasks and has – so far – received little external support. In addition, the proposed new curriculum model requires new competencies from teachers.

In vocational schools, the traditional knowledge-oriented teaching culture continues to outweigh the problem solving approach. In addition, a low level of foreign language knowledge among managers and teachers often prevents a better and quicker adaptation of modern international experiences and information. Also, teachers of theoretical vocational subjects are seldom in contact with firms, which makes it difficult for them to make their teaching relevant for the solution of concrete real tasks and also prevents them from continuously updating their own knowledge and expertise in a period of fast organisational and technological changes.

There is no appropriate teacher pre- and in-service training infrastructure in place to prepare vocational education teachers for their new roles.

There is a need for systematically training of a new type of school managers. School management still very often shows the characteristics of behaviour under the previous system of centralised, hierarchical and top-down administration. This cannot be a surprise as changes introduced in educational management have been fragmentary, gradual and did not affect the system as a whole. At the same time the school's environment has changed radically, both with respect to the administrative system and in terms of their relations with the labour market. Some school directors and teachers are able to respond to these changes, others not.

Educational administrators need to be equipped for their new tasks. At the national level, competencies of the various ministries involved in vocational education and training have not sufficiently been clarified. Ministerial staff remains predominantly involved in administrative activities. As a result, there is no clear strategic policy making in vocational education leaving the initiatives for adaptation to labour market changes largely to lower levels in the system, including individual schools.

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

In general, it will be necessary to change a system which employs many poorly used and badly paid employees into a system which makes the best use of a smaller number of more qualified and better paid employees.

In order to secure a professional and dedicated teaching force, able to take up new roles and responsibilities, a radical restructuring of pre- and in-service teacher training of vocational education teachers has to be undertaken. The new teacher training system should be related to developing attractive teacher careers with clear assessment, promotion and salary progress decisions.

More in particular, we propose to:

- ☐ Build on the experiences made with teacher retraining programmes in the pilot schools.
- ☐ Establish special institutions for the (pre- and in-service) training of vocational

teachers which can guarantee that vocational teachers can acquire and maintain a high degree of labour market relevancy. This should also include more attention to mastering foreign languages.

☐ Further professionalise educational administrators at various levels. The ability of administrators to fulfil their new roles, and especially to communicate with other actors and to understand their interests, will be decisive for the overall quality, relevance and effectiveness of the system.

☐ Introduce a system of financial stimulation of managers and teachers of vocational schools for their further education and training.

These measures could contribute to the solution of issues 10, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21

Aim 6. Improve VET management

BACKGROUND

The present system of management of VET in the Czech Republic is characterised by two dominant features: an extremely high level of centralisation and a low level of participation of any other actors than school authorities

The high level of centralisation of decision making at the level of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, puts an enormous burden on the shoulders of the ministerial staff. Very often, they have to solve operational tasks for individual schools. They also have to approve hundreds of educational programmes and projects per year and administer a network of several thousands schools. These operational tasks siphon off any capacity for the development of more strategic and conceptual tasks. In contrast, regional and local school authorities have only few rights and low responsibility for planning, structure and quality of VET in their regions.

Decision making at all levels of VET administration is also dominated by representatives from the education sector. Representatives of other relevant ministries (such as industry, labour, regional development) and social partners co-operate only accidentally and by chance. There is no common institution where all actors with an interest in vocational education and training jointly meet. The consequence of this situation is that important decisions do not result from a consultation and involvement of all the concerned actors, which in turn significantly reduces the relevancy of VET with respect to labour market needs. It also creates obstacles for linking the subsystems of initial and further vocational education and training.

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

Earlier, we have already proposed the establishment of a National Council for Vocational Education and Training in order to stimulate public debate and participation of major interest groups in vocational policy making. We propose in addition:

- ☐ The improvement of inter-ministerial co-operation in the field of vocational education and training.
- ☐ The establishment of Regional School Offices by transforming the present structure of District School Offices and to bring them in line with the foreseen introduction of regional administration. These Regional School Offices should have the right to establish VET schools (presently the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education) and be responsible for decision making concerning the structure of vocational schools and vocational courses and the allocation of funds for VET.
- ☐ The development and introduction, in co-operation with the Union of Industry and Transport of the CR, the Czech and Moravian Chamber of Trade Unions, or the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic, a comprehensive system of participation at national, regional and local level of social partners in the adjustment of contents, structure, financing and quality control of VET.
- ☐ The promotion of the establishment of School Boards with the participation of teachers, parents and local interest groups.

These proposals could help with the solution of problems ad 1, 6, 9, 10, 16, 17

Aim 7. Innovate the financing of VET

BACKGROUND

Initial vocational education is almost exclusively financed from public resources (from the state budget through the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports), while the contribution from other sources is low and actually still decreasing. This development, obviously, strengthens the role of the Ministry of Education and weakens the role of other VET actors. However, it is not possible to expect a further increase of funds for initial VET from the state budget in the coming period. Indeed, its present funding may soon appear to be unsustainable.

A high proportion of the expenditures for initial vocational education is drawn by a constantly growing number of "state apprentices" for whom the state has to finance also the practical part of training. This is to a large extent caused by the fact that employers have increasingly withdrawn from involvement in their training.

Moreover, the disbursement structure for initial VET is unfavourable, because the share of wage costs in overall expenditures is growing while the share of material costs is falling, which threatens to lower the quality of the material equipment in schools and accordingly also the quality of teaching. Only a small part of the necessary investment demands of VET schools has been covered over the past few years and available equipment is gradually becoming obsolete. This situation is all the more critical in view of the necessary expansion of information and communication technology in vocational education and training.

Finally, it has to be noted that the development of further vocational education and training is not supported by any financial stimulation from the side of the state. Expenditures by firms for staff development grow only very slowly, although they are already very low in comparison with other countries.

The method of funding of vocational education has to be changed not only in terms of relieving or removing actual obstacles but also in the light of accepting a long-term perspective. It is expected that the future economic and social development (globalisation, internationalisation, information technologies) will substantially increase demands for quality VET which require in turn considerable expenditures for the introduction of educational standards, system monitoring, quality evaluation and control, training of teachers, school equipment and so on. Therefore, it is essential not only to increase the efficiency of use of funds but also to look for additional resources.

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

We propose:

- ☐ Introducing initial VET financing from different sources and stimulating the volume of financial means from other sources than the state budget. In the case of initial VET, the schools should be financially stimulated to search for additional financial means. Employers should be motivated to financially contribute to vocational education, either through tax relief, or by a differentiation of their social and employment contributions.
- ☐ Considering the possibility of co-financing the practical part of training of "state apprentices" through the mediation of labour offices.
- ☐ Introducing financial motivation of firms in further vocational development of their staff either through tax relief, or by a differentiation of their contributions to social and employment funds.
- ☐ Diversifying the structure of the founders of VET schools, and more particularly to allow the sectoral associations of employers and regional VET bodies to establish schools.

These proposals could help with the solution of problems ad 11, 12, 16

Aim 8. Innovate VET legislation

BACKGROUND

While the demands placed on VET are constantly growing and require its continuous and flexible innovation, the existing laws and other rules that regulate vocational education and training are changing only slowly. In fact, they have become more and more obsolete and even tend to create obstacles for the implementation and dissemination of innovations which have been already developed, such as the use of new educational concepts, or the experimentation with modular organisation of curricula, or the integration of vocational and technical schools. In short, this refers to all important aspects of VET (contents, structure, management, financing, etc.).

The field of further vocational training still has not been regulated by any law and therefore tends to develop spontaneously without strategic aims. There is no co-ordination, nor are there clearly defined competencies of individual actors.

Some parts of educational regulations neither are in line with the Constitution which clearly states that responsibilities and obligations can only be defined by law.

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

☐ We propose creating the legal basis for recognition and continuation of experiments such as undertaken in the Phare pilot schools.
☐ Developing a basic conception for a reform of educational legislation.
☐ Preparing the innovation of the existing laws and other rules regulating the initial VET, or eventually to draft proposals for new laws, enabling the implementation of proposals expressed for all the strategic aims suggested in this policy paper.
☐ We propose drafting legislation for further vocational education and training.

These proposals could help with the solution of problems ad 4, 24

Aim 9. Create capacities for continuous VET innovation

BACKGROUND

The transformation of the system of vocational education from one preparing for relatively stable and guaranteed employment in clearly defined occupational sectors into another which prepares for dynamic, uncertain employment on a labour market increasingly affected by international developments, creates a new environment for research and development.

Recent research activities, though valuable as such, have been characterised by an absence of policy and strategy and have been dominated by ad-hoc research interests of the Ministry of Education and the specialised research institute for vocational education. Research has therefore particularly neglected issues that fall outside the immediate competence of the Ministry of Education (continuing education, the role of vocational education within a strategy for lifelong education, the relevance of VET for the labour market etc.).

An overall research policy in the field of vocational education would also ask for improvement of the national research infrastructure, a better co-ordination of the various research institutions involved, and improved communication between decision-makers, educational practitioners and researchers in order to maximise relevancy and applicability of research. The recently established Research Council of the Ministry of Education is a good step in the right direction.

As the impetus for change will increasingly come from many sides – from the State, schools, social partners and from the students themselves, a capacity for change has to be established on all levels, including schools, and each level be given clearly defined responsibility and space for an independent manoeuvre. The appropriate management tools to reconcile "bottom up" and "top down" approaches are still to be developed.

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

We recommend the following:

- ☐ Develop a long-term research programme for vocational education and training congruent to the strategic aims of a future-oriented policy and to improve the communication between policy makers, educators and researchers in order to maintain a high level of relevancy and applicability of research.
- ☐ Develop an infrastructure for other types of support besides research, such as school development, introduction of information and communication technologies, and development of international co-operation of schools.
- ☐ Stimulate and enable schools, organisationally and financially, to engage in a process of continuous innovation.
- ☐ Develop capacities that allow to evaluate, disseminate and generalise the results of school based innovations.

These measures could help to solve problems mentioned under 18, 19, 21, 25

4. TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY INITIATIVE

BACKGROUND

In the Czech Republic, a long-term strategy for VET development is still missing. Indeed, there is not even a generally accepted concept for the future development of the VET system. Up till now, there has been a dominance of ad-hoc measures seeking to solve urgent problems. It is necessary to face this fact but not to neglect the positive developments that have taken place.

The EU Commission, in its document Agenda 2000 assessing the conditions for Czech EU membership, states that the VET system in the Czech Republic develops in a proper direction, though quite spontaneously and that "Today there is a need for a strategic approach towards reforms, which is transformed eventually into legislative changes."

Earlier, we have also argued that within a lifelong learning perspective, agreed upon by all OECD Ministers of Education, it is becoming imperative to address the education system as a whole. The required integrated system will have to link together:

☐ all phases and levels of education (from pre-school to higher education)
☐ all sectors of the educational system (initial and continuing education; education for youth and adults)
☐ all stakeholders (the State, enterprises, teachers, parents and individual students)
☐ all types of provision (school-based and enterprise-based)
☐ all providers (state, public, private)
☐ all forms of learning (formal and informal)

Such an education system will have to allow for a high degree of flexibility and diversity at the level of programmes and institutions, whereas the necessary degree of cohesion and integration will have to be guaranteed by:

☐ a scheme of financing that provides adequate incentives for the participation of major stakeholders
☐ an infrastructure of
  - education and qualification standards
  - assessment and certification mechanisms
  - procedures for evaluation, accreditation and licensing of providers

The development and maintenance of this infrastructure should be a joint responsibility of the State and the social partners. The necessary mechanisms and platforms for negotiating, consultation and consensus building should therefore be established.

A comprehensive package of policy initiatives thus has to include:

☐ formulation of long-term aims and principles
☐ agreement of the necessary legal and financial framework
☐ introduction and maintenance of support systems
☐ capacities for continuous evaluation and feedback

ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN

Taking into account established practices in EU and OECD countries, our main overall recommendation is to initiate the process of elaborating a long-term strategy for (vocational) education policy based on the involvement of all stakeholders.

Concretely, we propose a two-step procedure:

STEP 1:
Swift implementation of the immediate actions proposed in this report, once sufficient agreement has been reached

This would concern especially what has been regarded as positive experiences from the pilot school experiments. It could also be considered to allow for a so-called "two-speed" development model in which the pilot schools would be allowed to continue their further development, while at the same time other schools would be placed in a position to implement what has been decided worthwhile.

STEP 2:
Continue the discussion on the present report about initial vocational education by the preparation of a Green Paper on the Transformation of the Education System in the Czech Republic, using the existing results of the Phare VET reform Programme.

In contrast to the current report which focuses mainly on initial VET reform, the proposed Green Paper should deal with the transformation of the whole Czech educational system within the perspective of building a system of lifelong learning for all.

The Ministry of Education should then initiate and co-ordinate the next stages of the consultation process, followed by the preparation of a White Book on Education based on discussions of all relevant partners. The White Book should represent a binding political document, which would be included into the Statement of the Government of the Czech Republic on the Policy of Human Resources Development and subsequently form the basis for proposals for a new Law on Education.

Further steps
A possible Time schedule for these two steps could look as follows:

1997
October: Discussions on the programme document at the international conference
Establishment of a National Task Force to write the Green Paper
November: Dissemination of results of the conference

December: Ministry of Education presents Action Plan for implementation of agreed actions

1998
May: National Conference on the draft Green Paper

Assessment of implementation of actions
June: Establishment of the National VET Council (NVC)
Ministry of Education takes initiative for the White Book on Education
September: NVC proposes further action with respect to reform of initial and further VET
December: Presentation of the White Book

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CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION/ ASSESSMENT QUALITY TEACHER TRAINING

Bohumil JANYŠ

1. INITIAL SITUATION

Over the last decades, the Czech vocational education system has undergone a development similar to that encountered in most countries of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Block. The educational policy and education content and objectives used to be unified to a major degree in terms of both the concept and methodology throughout the Central and Eastern European countries. In the early 1990's, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the political changes in its satellite countries, the education systems in these countries were characterised by identical management control and certification methods and also their educational structures used to be very similar.

For the curricular policy of the post-Communist countries, certain specific features are typical, which also affected the system of vocational education in the Czech Republic.

- The major role assigned to educational objectives is characteristic for the definition of the objectives of vocational education in Central and Eastern European countries. Therefore, apart from pure professional standard, the objectives of vocational education include also educational standard. This situation, somewhat unusual for EU countries, proceeds from the tasks of secondary education in the post-Communist countries. Mostly due to political and economic reasons, in the educational systems in these countries the completion of general education has been postponed until during secondary education. This tendency, currently understood rather as a boost for general education has survived to give rise to very specific aspects in these systems. Another cause why the completion of general education was postponed only until the secondary education stage was due to the shorter education cycles of the schools providing primary education (8 or 9 years). Nowadays, the difference is slowly being offset. In the post-Communist countries, primary education is getting longer and changes in the educational systems in the EU countries often result in boosting the component of general education.
- For post-Communist countries, the prevailing 'scholarly' concept of vocational training is characteristic. The concept is based upon a high proportion of theoretical education, which goes beyond the general education mentioned above. The share of basic vocational education is significant and is intended to secure the higher flexibility of graduates should they change jobs later in life. The school training involves fifty or more per cent of time dedicated to training for the future profession.
- The state continues to exert a strong influence in the educational structure, its form and content, particularly in countries with a high proportion of state sector in the national economy. Often, this influence is related to the generally low activity of employees and employers' organisations which so far have failed to establish their proper positions in the social partner structures in these communities.

In the process of design of the model curricular programmes, it can be seen that the national educational concepts and their initial educational structures are strongly affected by national traditions and experiences. These traditions tend to be spontaneously reflected in the educational systems even after decades of efforts for strict centralisation and supra-national effort for unification which were characteristic of the former COMECON countries.

The curricular policy in the Czech Republic has succeeded in retaining its specific national aspects even under the condition of Soviet centralism and these aspects have influenced also the developments after November 1989 [the fall of Communism in the country in November 1989].

- ☐ The system of branches of vocational training had been based on an old trade tradition which evolved over many centuries in Bohemia and which was linked with the educational development of the Central European region.
- ☐ In the years before 1989, the system of vocational training was specifically conceived to create broadly based branches with a major proportion of general and basic vocational topics. This was intended to provide for the major adaptability and flexibility of the school graduate. The reform of vocational training accomplished in 1983-84 was made in pursuance of extensive analyses of the professional fields for the individual groups (analysis of related professions down to the job and key work operations levels). The number of branches providing apprentice certification was reduced to 148 and the number of branches in which students graduated by vocational Maturita was 62.
- ☐ In response to the demands by big state enterprises, 48 training branches were established in which the school-leavers after four years of study graduate with both the apprentice certificate and Maturita - i. e. with two qualifications.
- ☐ The content of education in all its components (general, general vocational, specific vocational and practical) was designed in concept in keeping with fixed uniform guidelines, often dictated by political rather than pedagogic interests and requirements.

2. SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE CURRICULAR POLICY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AFTER THE YEAR 1989

Following the changes in the political systems of the Central and Eastern European countries, many changes in the educational structures and their professional objectives also resulted.

Generally, it can be observed that the dynamics and scope of changes in the different countries are correlated to the dynamics of changes in their economical structures.

The formerly comprehensive vocational education systems have started to differentiate. In this process, these decentralisation tendencies are the most apparent in countries in which the position of the state in the control of the national economy has been significantly weakened.

Following the changes of 1989, also the educational system in the field of vocational training has undergone what can now be seen as the classical development from the rigid centralist model towards one characterised by a major degree of freedom and one which was being established mainly by initiative at the grass-root level. The newly emerging branches of professional training were characterised by the following aspects:

- ☐ free choice of educational goals
- ☐ creation of specific educational tracks

Unlike developments in most other post-Communist countries, the developments in the curricular policy in the Czech Republic have evolved differently, resulting in a move away from the expected and proclaimed trends. Starting from a relatively low number of branches of training (148 branches with apprentice certification and about 60 branches with the Maturita as well as 48 combined branches) these developments resulted in the creation of hundreds of new branches.

Far from accidental, this branch expansion had a few political and economic reasons:

- ☐ The schools and their management which had been hamstrung by the rigid rules of the state curricular policies for many years, felt the need to put to life their own requirements and notions about educational programmes. This pendulum effect has affected the vast majority of schools and had resulted in demands for changes also where no adequate social or pedagogic background had been established.
- ☐ These extensive curricular changes evolved against the background of fast and exceptionally large-scale privatisation of the national economy. Over 75% of the national economy, virtually all of which had been in the state hands, was denationalised. In the process, the structure of the labour force changed fundamentally. The labour market demanded scores of new professions which had no equivalent in the educational system. The demand for highly trained workers for the private sector in small and medium-sized companies as well as for medium and higher echelons of corporate management and in the tertiary sector has been growing at an unprecedented pace.

The changes in the labour market were accompanied by extensive changes in the employment pattern. Over the last five years, 2.5 million people have changed jobs in the Czcech Republic. This means that a full one third of the economically active population has changed jobs.

- ☐ Logically, the schools have done their utmost to respond flexibly to these wide-spread labour force movements by producing a supply of education dominated by many new branches in the field of management, financial services and the tertiary sector.
- ☐ The right-wing liberal government has not been putting in place any legal obstacles for the progressive development of the new educational activities, thereby facilitating the

acceleration of the whole process of curricular changes.

- The legislation of the Ministry of Education has enabled the establishment of private schools which have played a major role in curricular reforms, particularly in 1992-1995. Free of the ballast of legal procrastination and time-consuming experiments, private schools have found it possible to respond flexibly to the labour market demands, requirements of the different regions and desires of the parents. Besides, competition from private schools has succeeded in activating many state schools to design their new educational programmes as these schools were loosing students in the existing branches of training at an alarming rate.
- Also a change in the uniform financing system introducing financing according to the numbers of pupils has meant another acceleration aspect. The efforts to attract pupils and their parents to new educational programmes have also meant a major contribution for the dynamics of the changes.
- Mainly due to political reasons but also due to major staff changes, the Ministry of Education had refrained from and actually had been unable to design and put in place legal measures whereby to regulate the inception of the new branches of training in at least their content and goals. The practical concept policies have shifted more onto voluntary professional teacher associations (such as NEMES, IDEA and others) and research institutes operating in the educational sector (the Research Institute of Technical and Vocational Education, VUOS, in the case of vocational education).

It can be said in general that all the above reasons have resulted in the occurrence of the big bang in the educational system of the Czech Republic which has resulted in a steep proliferation of branches of training from the former 250 to about five times the number. Presently, the system involves over 1500 branches of training and specialisation at educational levels 2 and 3.

Naturally, these precipitous changes in the curricular development have brought about both benefits and drawbacks.

Drawbacks brought about by the changes:

- the disintegration of the branches of education into hundreds of new branches which often provide training for the same or similar professions
- the establishment of classes in branches for training in which the school has failed to be authorised and for which it lacks adequately trained teachers
- the existence of small 'incomplete' classes with consequent pressure for additional funding from the government budget
- the compromised transparency of the educational goals and achievements
- the disintegration of the evaluation criteria

Benefits brought about by the changes:

- ending state directiveness in the content of education
- bringing the school closer to the needs of the region and the parents
- significant democratisation of both external and internal workings of the school
- freedom for the school in conceiving educational goals and needs

☐ flexible catering to newly emerging jobs with trained graduates

The last-named benefit merits a few additional comments. The free curricular policy of mainly the private but also state secondary schools has quickly created the educational supply for the most sought-after jobs. For example in the field of management and in the finance sector, over sixty new branches of education have come into existence. The first few thousands of graduates from these branches have already entered the labour market. Surprisingly, it is the graduates from these new branches who belong to those who have been the most readily absorbed by the labour market and who have enjoyed the lowest unemployment rates and the shortest time remaining jobless (see please the VUOS study of 1996).

The spontaneous, mostly „bottoms-up" initiative of the schools has borne the main brunt of the quick transformation of the vocational education system and has accomplished what no centrally controlled reform of the educational system has or could have done. In the shortest possible time, the educational supply has adopted to the needs of the labour market, given naturally all the drawbacks mentioned earlier plus a score of other open issues for which the institutions responsible for the system are only seeking answers to. It is apparent the procedure adopted was the only viable one in view of the economic changes which were under way, even if it has brought about some drawbacks which are only now being addressed.

3. INTRODUCTION OF THE PHARE PROGRAMME IN THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

The first major activity whereby the Phare programme was introduced into the transformation processes of vocational education in the Czech Republic was that by the firm Birks-Sinclair and Associates Ltd. (SSBS).

Within the framework of the Phare LMPR (Labour Market Restructuring Programme) the Strategic Review of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in the Czech and Slovak Republics was drawn up by the said educational and research centre in 1991-1992 (SSBS).

The Review focused on the potential for reform of the system of vocational education with special emphasis on secondary schools.

The Review was accepted by the Ministries of Education of the Czech and Slovak Republics at a joint meeting in October 1992 in Papiernicky (Slovak Republic) as one of the possible alternatives for the future progressive development of the educational system.

The recommendations of the Review for the field of curriculum proposed the restructuring of branches of existing secondary school vocational education to form a smaller number of broadly oriented groups of occupations within which the pupils for the branches of study and branches for apprentices would be trained in a common first year of study.

It has been also proposed in the Review that the curricula place added emphasis on basic skills and the introduction of a new subject, Introduction into the World of Labour' has been recommended. Furthermore, the Review has recommended that within the framework of the curriculum so conceived, the vocational specialisation is postponed until later years of secondary school education so that to establish a labour force base with a higher degree of general education and ability to work under conditions requiring repeated re-training.

In the aspect of changes of structure and the curriculum, the Review has approved the measures taken earlier by the governments of the two nations.

The Review has proposed reworking of the structure of the vocational education to consider aiming to provide higher flexibility through a higher number of optional patterns of graduation from the vocational education. In this token, the Review has proposed methods how to redesign the curricula and qualifications structures to fulfil this end. In particular, it has been proposed that the higher number of options for the accomplishment of the vocational education with the relevant qualifications be complemented by a strengthened structure of the post-secondary VET.

At the same time, the Review has proposed a number of measures for pilot verification in the project objectives in a limited number of schools in the two countries. In the Czech Republic, in an open tender organised in co-operation with the VUOS, 20 pilot Secondary Apprentice Schools and Secondary Technical Schools were chosen. In 19 of these, the experimental verification of the Review objectives elaborated in detail in the Phare VET project has been under way since the 1993/94 school year.

In the meanwhile, three fundamental studies were drawn up in 1993 and 1994 as the problem analysis of the Czech education system within the framework of the Phare RES programme (Renewal of the Education System in the Czech Republic). The studies included the following components:

Development of Curriculum and Teaching Aids
School Management and Administration

For the future development of the curricular policy of vocational education the Analytical Evaluation Study was of major importance.

The recommendations put forth in these studies have respected the tradition and standard of the Czech vocational education system while putting in place a framework for changes which will facilitate international comparability and emphasise greater flexibility of vocational education.

The general recommendations of these studies require the following changes in particular:

- the broader design of the occupational profiles and structuring of the branches of training (into about 20 educational clusters)
- placing emphasis on general education and a broadly conceived curriculum as a part of the qualification basis aimed at facilitating possible future re-training
- the integration of key skills into the curriculum of all educational clusters
- step-wise introduction into the world of labour
- postponing specialisation within the educational directions until later years of study
- the introduction of modules enabling a broad range of curricular variants and providing for various optional types of specialisation
- the formulation of goals as outputs capable of evaluation
- the introduction of current diagnostic and standardised methods of pupil assessment
- the creation of a stepped structure of certifications corresponding to (four) open levels of secondary and post-secondary vocational education

The Phare RES analytical evaluation study is a major document in the process of the transformation of the Czech educational system which covers the following topics in the area of design of the curriculum and the educational means:

- curriculum definition
- analysis of the existing curriculum of the Czech school in the domestic and international contexts
- basic assumptions of the new curricular policy
- methods of curriculum evaluation
- theoretical and methodological basic assumptions for curriculum design

The input report for the OECD examiners Changes of the Educational System in the Czech Republic and the subsequent Report of the OECD Examiners on the Educational Policy in the Czech Republic of 1995 have been other two major stimuli for the transformation of the Czech vocational education.

Generally speaking, the notions of the OECD examiners have supported the SSBS recommendations and the ideas of the Phare RES analytical study. At the current implementation phase, the following recommendations have been highlighted as priority objectives:

- changing the system so that outputs are checked rather than inputs
- establishing educational and professional standards resulting form the consensus of the educational and professional spheres
- building the institutional infrastructure and mechanisms securing current curricular change

Political recommendation No. 6 has been formulated as the need for the establishment of the Agency for the Curriculum, Standards, and Certification in Vocational Education. In the document, the need for a systematic approach and institutional establishment of curricular reform on a basis similar to that existing in the OECD and EU countries has been stressed. The following procedure has been recommended: drawing up the catalogue of qualifications at all levels of secondary vocational education, defining the professional standards and subsequently the educational programmes and teaching tools and the establishment of methods of assessment and certification.

This independent agency operating in research and development is envisaged to co-operate with decision-makers and social partners. Furthermore, the importance of the regional level of curriculum development has been stressed. Amongst their other observations the examiners have recommended the better integration of the vocational and general education sectors and to integrate their programmes. These trends are becoming ever stronger in the highly developed countries, and have also been highlighted by the SSBS whereby the introduction of vocational modules in the curriculum of general upper secondary school has been recommended. Also, the issue of the inclusion of pre-vocational training at the primary school level (year 9) has been raised for consideration.

Most of the recommendations of the Phare LMRP projects and the objectives of Phare RES have been taken into account in the work of the Phare VET pilot schools.

4. PRINCIPLES OF WORK OF PHARE PILOT SCHOOLS

The curriculum of the secondary vocational education curriculum for the Phare VET pilot schools has been designed upon the principles of flexibility and adaptability. The curriculum design provides for sufficiently wide corridors for the individual educational programmes, wide enough so that to accommodate both the vocational requirements and the specific aspects of the school and/or region.

The curricular issues in the Phare pilot schools project have been addressed on the two-stage curriculum principle.

The basic curriculum expresses at a more general level the binding goals, contained circuits, the ratio between the general and vocational education components and further characteristics in relation to the different levels and directions of vocational education, which are obligatorily reflected in the school curricula.

The basic curriculum was developed in the Research Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (VUOS), first in the form of a working version handed over to the pilot schools for review. After their comments had been processed, the final version was developed which became the basic input for the design of the school curriculum of the pilot schools.

In the school curriculum, the topics outlined by the basic curriculum are elaborated in detail so that to obtain the education projects of the pilot schools. Within the framework established by the basic curriculum, each school is thus able to shape its own project in view of the regional demands of the labour market, the interests of the pupils and the parents, tradition of the school etc.

The school curriculum has been developed at individual pilot schools as their own document drawn up in pursuance of the procedures and instructions proposed by the VUOS. Concurrently, the model school curriculum was being developed also by the workers of the VUOS who supplied the schools with their accomplishments together with the necessary consultations.

This approach complies with the SSBS recommendations especially thanks to its ability to have its educational tracks expanded and/or varied by the pilot schools while meeting the binding and controllable basic specifications. Intensive participation by the pilot schools in the curriculum development has been envisaged which, provided sufficient co-ordination exists, can contribute to the general awareness of the pedagogic public of the Phare objectives. Moreover, the approach enabled the application of both the modular system recommended by foreign experts and the locally more common linear subject-oriented design of the educational aims and content.

The Basic Curriculum has been developed as a document serving for the definition of nationally required educational levels and the introduction of the SSBS priorities in the pilot schools. The basic curriculum performs mainly the function of integration so that to provide for the compatibility of educational tracks within the framework of different educational directions and has been one of the tools whereby to secure that the education rendered as a whole is systematic and reasonable, contributing moreover to the balancing of the general education, vocational theoretical and vocational practical components of the training. The Basic Curriculum has proved to counter-balance the requirements of the employers' community which usually tend to prefer narrow and specific vocational training. Out of this, the primary orientation of the basic curriculum mainly on general education, key skills and basic vocational education has followed. The basic curriculum so conceived has no direct link with the envisaged specific output qualification for a specific job or specialisation. A common basic curriculum has been designed in the general education part for different educational levels (i. e. for all education directions) while in the vocational part specific curricula have been developed for individual directions of vocational education.

Therefore, educational levels and educational directions formed the framework within which the basic curriculum of vocational education was developed.

The levels and directions of vocational education are defined in the basic curriculum by the educational goals and characteristics of the topic circuits in the different components of the basic curriculum. These include:

☐ the key skills, which are the basic skills for the personal, social and professional development of each pupil and which perform the integration role within the curriculum

☐ the general education component, which includes the teaching of languages, and education in social and natural sciences and mathematics, arts and physical training components

☐ the vocational education component which sets up the elements of the vocational training in the various directions

While the key skills and the general education components are defined in the basic curriculum as common for the whole spectrum of the educational programmes within the framework of a given level, the vocational education component is defined within this level in a differentiated manner so as to provide for different directions.

The pilot schools were given the basic curriculum in the Spring 1994 together with the Procedure of Development of the School Curriculum methodical instruction in which the concept of the two-stage curriculum was explained and which contained the instructions for school curricula development.

The pilot schools undertook the design of their own respective curricula in pursuance of this procedure. The School Curriculum as the set of specific educational programmes implemented at the pilot school in question has been developed in pursuance of the:

1) Basic curriculum, for the development of which:

   ☐ the requirements applicable for the different educational levels as established under the basic curriculum and concerning the duration of education, the quantitative requirements for the scope of general education (45% and 35% for educational levels 3 and 2 respectively), the educational goals and topic circuits for the general and vocational education sections respectively are binding and

   ☐ the educational goals elaborated in the basic curriculum for the area of key skills are recommended. For the latter specifications it applies that the choice of level of key skills to be treated in detail in the school curriculum can be made so that it is in keeping with the needs of the related vocational education (such as the requirements for communication skills in the tertiary sector

2) Qualification requirements
   In view of their relevance in terms of the labour market demands and international comparability of the products of vocational education, the school curricula have been designed so that the product of training, particularly in specialisation with graduation with the apprentice certificate, was in keeping with the qualification demands accepted by the social partners, and mainly the employers. For this purpose, the schools were supplied with so-called professional standards developed by the VUOS defining the activities the mastering whereof are required for the performance of the various jobs.

   The school curricula designed by the individual pilot schools include the following basic sections:

☐ the profile of the graduate
☐ the scheme of educational tracks
☐ the educational programme (containing the characteristics of the educational programme, the system of the syllabus and/or descriptions of the educational modules plus detailed specifications of the relevant key skills)

5. MAIN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The main accomplishments in all works carried out within the framework of the Phare project (including the experimental activities at the pilot schools) can be considered to be the fact that the individual projects have always been closely linked with the developments in the broad sphere to which the projects directly responded and, secondly, that already during the experiment, the projects succeeded in influencing the broad base of secondary technical schools.

This link could be achieved only because the expert teams were able to confront their ideas with local experience, traditions and the concept ideas of the Czech implementation teams.

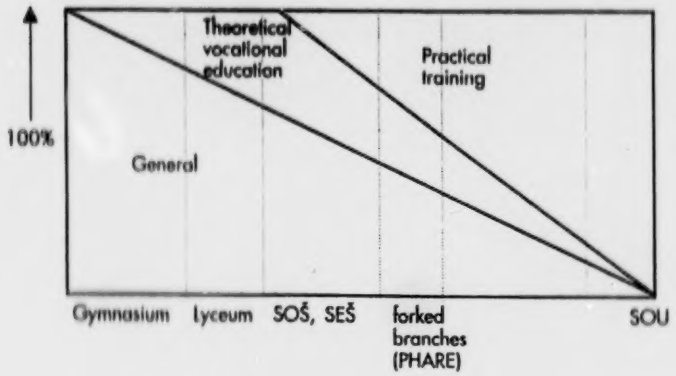
In evaluating the work done, it is difficult to highlight the contribution of one or another team or programme as their co-operation has been mostly very close. Rather than covering only the products of projects of the Phare programme, the evaluation encompasses the products of the whole educational system.

The most important curricular changes accomplished over the last seven years, which have influenced the educational system in a fundamental manner, are as follows:

☐ The creation of new educational forms at the boundaries between the formerly sharply split secondary general and vocational education components (G /general secondary schools/- SOŠ /secondary technical schools/, SOŠ and SOU /secondary apprentice schools/), a coherent system of education has been built. This system created by groups comprised of different educational programmes also profiles new types of education such as technical and economic lycees which emerge at the boundary between general grammar school education and training at secondary vocational schools.

Forms of education forked in a like manner and resulting in apprentice graduation or a 'Maturita' with common first or even second years of study, represent the connecting link between the study branches of secondary vocational schools and vocational training branches. The educational programmes of the Phare pilot schools designed in keeping with the SSBS objectives have been playing a major role in this new and progressive form of training.

SHARE OF THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL EDUCATION IN THE INDIVIDUAL FORMS OF TRAINING


Theoretical vocational education
Practical training
100%
General
Gymnasium
Lyceum
SOŠ, SEŠ
forked branches (PHARE)
SOU

SOŠ – Secondary Technical Schools
SOU – Secondary Apprentice Schools
SEŠ – Secondary Business Schools

☐ The legal barriers forming a rigid educational system have been done away with. The schools themselves have started to make their own decisions concerning their educational programmes which, while reflecting their own concepts and intentions, have taken into account the needs of their clients as well as regional interests.

Thereby, market demands have been met flexibly and graduates are being trained for the newly emerging economic structures in most industries and sectors.

The price paid by the educational system for this ready adaptation included the loss of clarity of the systems and compromised comparability of the standard of the products of the education process. With the numbers of schools and pupils growing, lowering of the standards of graduates has occasionally resulted.

☐ In pursuance of CEDEFOP analytical studies, which aim to compare the professional standards in the different EU countries, comparative studies of selected professions in the Czech Republic have been undertaken. A total of 209 professions published in the EU Bulletin were analysed and compared with 168 professions in the Czech Republic mostly at educational level 2 (i. e. the level of education with termination with apprentice certificate).

Concurrently with the development of the theoretical assumptions clarifying the problems related to the design and use of standards in vocational schooling, the input documents necessary for the formulation of the target and evaluation standards for different vocational training branches have been developed at the Research Institute of Technical and Vocational Education. These documents were of two types: one group comprised the comparative analyses of sections of the graduate profiles of Czech training branches as opposed to lists of on-the-job activities whereby the respective jobs are characterised in the European Union documents, the other including detailed specifications of the on-the-job activities which the graduates of the different training branches must be able to perform at a professional standard. These professional activity specifications were complemented with criteria according to which the pupils/graduates success rates in the performance of these activities can be measured.

☐ The model of the two-stage curriculum development (the basic and school curricula) was verified. The model was defended at the VUOS as a theoretical study in 1993 to be applied in the field, tested and evaluated at the Phare pilot schools from 1994.

The two-stage curriculum proceeds from the SSBS recommendations and it represents a totally new and progressive element in the curricular policy. In its standard section – the basic curriculum – it ensures the comparability of both the different educational levels and the essential general specialised knowledge standard of the different branches. At the same time, in its free section – the school curriculum – the model provides free space for the schools for their own profiling.

It can be observed that the principle of the two-stage curriculum development has proved its justification under the Czech conditions and this has facilitated the emergence of a broad spectrum of available educational range of the pilot schools within the unified framework of the basic curriculum. After the basic curriculum is finished in pursuance of the due amendment procedure, it will be possible to recommend it as the document defining the binding requirements for the development of the educational programmes to be applied throughout the system of vocational education as the benchmark for the approval of new educational programmes of the Ministry of Education.

The development of the school curricula at the pilot schools has proved the existence of a major creative potential and the ample capabilities of the pilot schools teachers. At the same time, the task has proved to be a major challenge, often one putting excessive strain on the teacher in the ordinary course of the school operations. Therefore, the so-called model educational programmes have been in the developing process since 1996 and these are intended to present in the generalised form the best experiences of the school curricula developers and to provide educational programmes projects of general applicability which it will be possible to integrate within the school curricula of the different schools with desiring to model their teaching on such a model.

The model educational programmes so conceived can serve the schools:

- ☐ as the directly applicable basis for their own school curricula in which only the specific sections such as those related to the specific activities specified for the graduate profile, or the optional subjects will be elaborated in specific detail
- ☐ as the building blocks for their own school curricula in which case only individual portions of the model curriculum, such as the general education subjects, selected sections of the specialised component, etc. can be used for the design of related educational programmes
- ☐ as the methodological sample of the concrete specification and detailed design of the basic curriculum

Under this concept, the model educational programmes can serve to spread the achievements of the Phare pilot schools experiment throughout the system of the vocational education in the Czech Republic.

6. STRATEGY OF THE CURRICULAR POLICY

The strategy of the curricular policy proceeds from the critical evaluation of the hitherto developments. The definition of goals of the curricular development, while respecting the field-tested achievements of the Phare pilot schools, has taken into account also other products of the curricular development efforts and their implementation throughout the system of secondary vocational education. The fast or even precipitous transformation of the Czech system of vocational education has been accompanied by a few problems which were mentioned earlier. For further acceleration in the progressive development of the educational system, these problems will have to be addressed with the same dedication which is invested in the introduction of new concept ideas.

7. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

☐ The transformation of the system of vocational education in the Czech Republic has been proceeding mainly spontaneously. Paradoxically, the developments have followed tendencies opposite to those encountered in most European countries, i. e. from a relatively low number of vocational training and study branches, towards numbers of branches many times higher than the European average. By the application of specific considerations of the different schools and regions, we have arrived at a situation where pupils are being trained for jobs corresponding to one and the same graduate profile (or one and the same job in some cases) in a number of branches which differ only very little from each other. It is the natural tendency of the government to reduce dramatically the number of branches of study to at least the original number. In the process, the government tends to use tools it has been accustomed to – there is the tendency to cancel branches without proper considerations. Thereby a major conflict has arisen with the schools' tendencies to develop their own educational programmes in the specific educational tracks of which the schools have been developing their own profiles while accounting in the goals definition also for the specific demands of the regional labour market as made by the future employers of the graduates. Naturally, attempts at addressing the conflict by administrative measures would both infringe upon the basic freedoms which the schools have acquired since November 1989 and run counter the trends prevailing in most European countries.

The solution to this situation is seen by the authors to be the basic priority of the curricular policy.
This solution should be based on the development and adoption of a system of principal branches of training.

Each of the proposed principal branches of training meets the requirement of full compatibility of the educational and professional standard, namely in the following aspects:

☐ common general education in pursuance of the educational standard of the relevant educational stage (Maturita, apprentice education etc.)

☐ the basic vocational education by the standard of the relevant cluster of branches (construction industry, agriculture, etc.) of the professional standard derived from the professional requirements for one or more jobs for which the pupils of the principal branch are being trained. The requirements of the common general education and those of the basic vocational education, together with the definition of the key skills have represented the educational standard, which is established in detail in the basic curriculum.

The professional standard follows smoothly from the educational standard in the detailed elaboration of the curricular document and is oriented towards the acquiring of the capability to perform in the professions included in the profile of graduate.

The system of principal branches has been designed, approved by the Ministry of Education and its legal form is currently being drawn up.

The principal branches in the field of professional training have been already conceived in view of the systems of training in the EU countries and provide for international comparability and compatibility.

The system of principal branches and their educational and professional goals will form the system of vocational education guaranteed by the state.

The school, according to its needs and/or the desires of the parents and the pupils proceeds to amend and specify the requirements of the national curriculum so that to include additional educational goals and, if desired, the professional standard can be broadened to cater to the needs of the region (e. g. big companies located in the region) or to accommodate the prevailing orientation of the pupils.

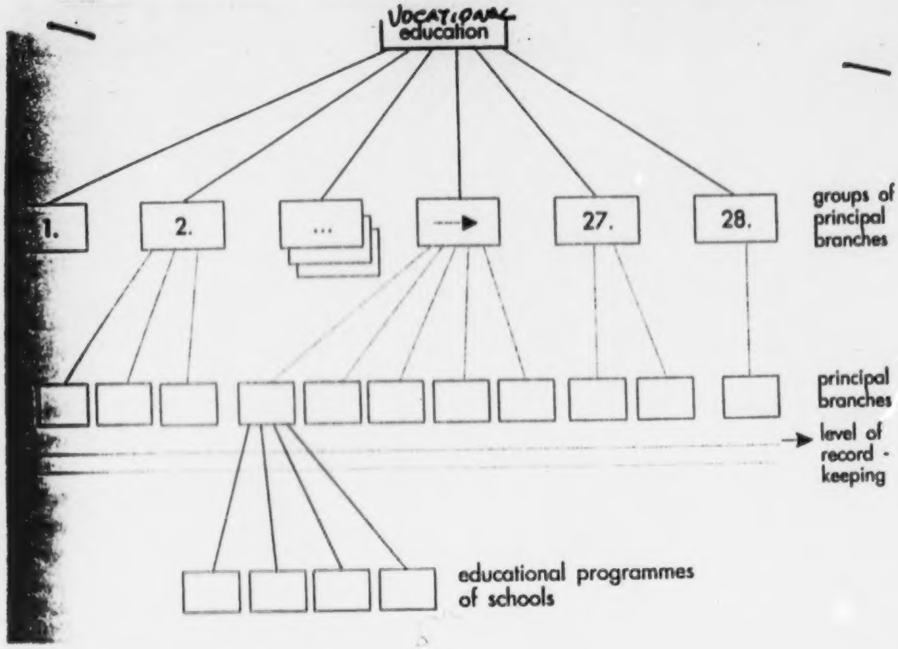
The principal branches are further extended into the educational programmes of the different schools. In the process, school-specific educational programmes are developed. (In the manner in which they are currently represented by the independent training branches as included within the schools' network.)

The detailed educational programmes at the school curriculum level can be developed also by the state at the level of model educational programmes.

The educational programmes of the different schools providing training for one and the same principal branch may differ one from another. However, they always must comply with the standardised educational requirements of the basic curriculum as well as the professional requirements of the given principal branch.

The relationships existing between the educational levels, clusters of branches, principal branches and educational programmes are shown in the following diagram:

STRUCTURE OF PRINCIPAL BRANCHES


VOCATIONAL
education
1.
2.
...
27.
28.
groups of principal branches
principal branches
level of record - keeping
educational programmes of schools

In the future, the above solutions shall be implemented in a step-wise manner throughout the system of education of the Czech Republic.

The development and launching of a functional system of the principal branches necessitates the design and implementation of professional standards.

> The creation of a system of professional standards comparable with the requirements for similar vocations in the EU countries and ones which would also form the target structures of the principal branches the authors consider to be the next priority of the curricular policy in the Czech Republic.

In terms of relevance vis-_-vis the needs of the labour market and the international comparability of the products of vocational education it is desirable that the final stage of vocational education and training, particularly in branches with graduation with the apprentice certificate, comply with the requirements of an accepted qualification. The formulation of these requirements is a subject requiring the joint work of the education sector and social partners, namely employers' representatives aiming to produce binding professional standards. These standards would define the target (output) requirements, particularly for the second level of education, in the form of:

☐ a listing of work activities or operations

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- ☐ the criteria according to which it shall be possible to assess the success rate in the performance of the activities considered
- ☐ pin-pointing the key educational areas which are essential for mastering these activities

Since the bodies operating in the employers' sphere which would be interested in this issue have as of yet failed to form properly, the professional standard specifications have been drawn up by the VUOS jointly with representatives of the educational sector and labour in some industries. International comparability was provided for by comparing the specifications with vocational characteristics drawn up within the EU (see please the comparability of vocations CEDEFOP mentioned earlier).

In its conclusions of the plenary session, the Torino-based Advisory Forum ETF defined professional standards as follows:

Standards are the structures for the arrangement of the VET. The standards contain the detailed description of the work tasks to be performed in the relevant professions and the description of the necessary knowledge and skills. The function of the standards can include: national acceptance of qualifications, quality assurance, guarantee of transparency, comparability of graduation certificates, guarantee of adequate wages upon entering a profession. The standards should have a legal status, the field of application should be nation-wide. the standards should cover all the relevant groups, the state should exercise the controlling role and school graduates should have the possibility to start their university studies.

In attempting international comparison of the target standards of vocational education, we have been aware of the major challenge involved in this undertaking. it is apparent that vocational education standards can be defined only at the national level. No European standards as an international benchmark standard have been in existence. According to the ETF conclusions, the EU countries only want to harmonise and fine-tune their individual educational systems. The nations have striven for better co-operation in order to facilitate the integration envisaged to take place in the future.

Within the framework of work on this project it has been necessary to renovate the proposed system of standards to form a part of the principal branches of training and to establish the legal conditions for their introduction and observance.

> The third priority of the curricular policy involves the establishment of the preconditions necessary for the nation-wide implementation of the two-stage system of development of the curricular documents.

The introduction of the two-stage system must be accomplished in the following forms:

- ☐ the basic curriculum (developed at the central level) which contains the general characteristics of the individual educational levels, definition of the general education component (the educational goals and the topic circuits), the definition of the basic vocational component of the education for its different levels and directions

☐ educational programmes (developed as model programmes or directly at the educational institutions), which determine the concept, content and pattern of a specific educational track. The system of educational programmes implemented at one school forms the school curriculum.

The essential precondition for the implementation of the two-stage curricular system is the legal establishment of the educational standard of the vocational education as expressed in the form of the basic curriculum which defines:

the status and functions of vocational education by the different levels of education in relation to the respective stages of education achieved, the rough outline of the educational goals and topic circuits by the different levels and directions of education, which shall ensure the implementation of the basic values and traditions of the community in the educational process while establishing the preconditions for the application of these in the form of knowledge, skills and habits of the graduates in the labour market.

The above three main priorities of the curricular policy, whether having resulted from the progress of the Phare pilot schools experiment or from the field experience of the school system, are aimed to affect the whole system of vocational education.

The implementation of the priorities outlined above would necessitate one more emergency measure to be taken. For the introduction of the system of principal branches, implementation of the educational programmes, the basic and the school curricula, it is necessary to put in place the appropriate laws and no amendment of the existing Schools Law will do.

> As the fourth priority, the drafting of a new School ACT (or law on vocational education) is recommended in which the new relationships and categories will be defined and established in relation to the school establishment bodies, schools and social partners.

The new School ACT should also deal with other emergencies directly related to the curricular policy.

First and foremost, the ACT should:

☐ remove the existing legal obstacles in the field of free development of educational programmes within the framework of the given educational standards

☐ establish a set of essential and indispensable requirements applicable for the development of educational programmes in their relation to the different levels of education

☐ to introduce a simple system of registration of new curricular documents

At the same time, in the context of the new Schools Law a number of measures need be adopted which shall:

- support the development of model educational programmes both in creative groups of teachers and in the competent institutions for general use by all educational institutions showing interest
- stimulate and create the preconditions necessary for systematic co-operation of the educational sphere with the social partners at the local, regional and national levels in the development, implementation and updating of the educational standards, professional standards as well as specific school and model educational programmes

For progress in the new curricular policy it is necessary:

- to create an independent institution operating across the ministerial sectors and dealing currently with all key issues of the whole system of vocational education (the Agency for the Curriculum, Standards and Certification). For the establishment of the agency, to use the existing Research Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (after its reconstruction).
- to organise a broad teacher training campaign in the area of educational programmes designing and including this issue in the teaching plans of the university departments responsible for teacher undergraduate studies

8. QUALITY EVALUATION AND CERTIFICATION

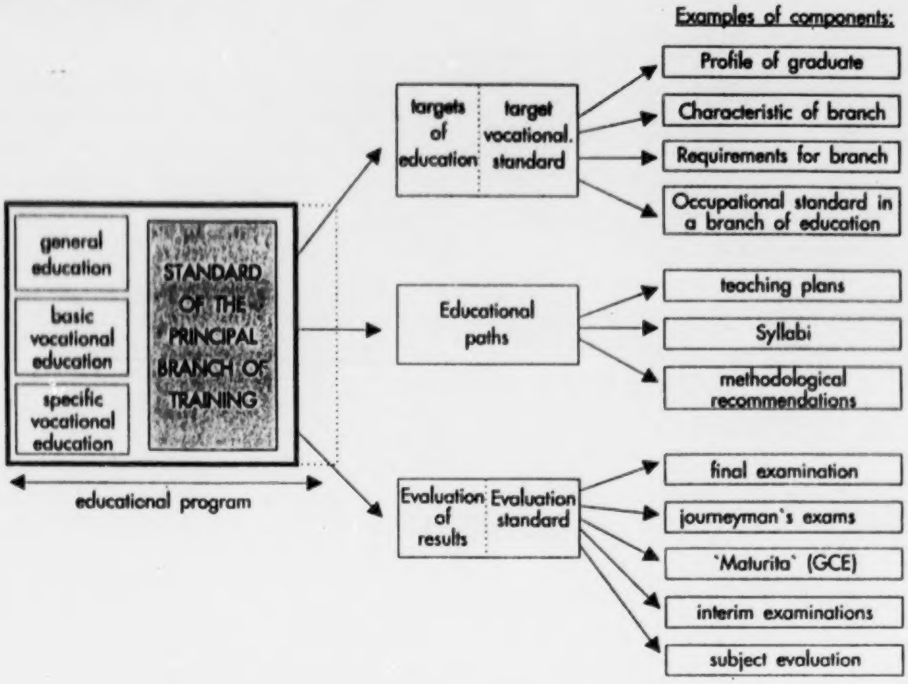
In the foregoing chapter the target structures in the branches of vocational education were defined by means of educational and professional standards.

These define the educational goals and are contained in the curricular documents mainly in the profile of graduate or in the detailed listing of the target requirements for the different vocations.

The means whereby the objectives of the target standards are implemented is the educational path elaborated in detail in the system of the curricular documents of the relevant schools.

Logically, the whole educational cycle is concluded with the issue of evaluation of the education success rate and the measure of accomplishment of the educational and vocational goals. In this area, the category of evaluation standards must be newly defined in both categories of the general and vocational education.

The pattern of the educational programme of vocational education can be shown in the general form in the following schematic:


Examples of components:
general education
basic vocational education
specific vocational education
STANDARD OF THE PRINCIPAL BRANCH OF TRAINING
educational program
targets of education
target vocational. standard
Educational paths
Evaluation of results
Evaluation standard
Profile of graduate
Characteristic of branch
Requirements for branch
Occupational standard in a branch of education
teaching plans
Syllabi
methodological recommendations
final examination
journeyman's exams
'Maturita' (GCE)
interim examinations
subject evaluation

In the design of the evaluation standards, evaluation tools must be developed. When collecting the field experience of the pilot schools where the evaluation has only now been started, the utilised methods of external monitoring must be appraised favourably, as well as the moves towards school self-evaluation. However, these are only notions indicative of the solutions to be sought.

The self-evaluation experiments undertaken by the Association of Schools of Higher Studies which have undertaken to develop a system of regular evaluation of higher vocational schools has proved very interesting. The project has been carried out with Phare support and a mechanism of evaluations including the relevant evaluating criteria and the organisational structure have been developed within its framework. Also in this case, the project was an experiment involving a limited number of schools with analogous product limitations.

The issue of evaluation is becoming a key one also in the international context as, particularly in vocational education, it is the starting criterion capable to provide for comparability of qualifications and free movement of labour across the European region.

The creation of evaluation mechanisms can be considered to be another priority of vocational education.

For the development of the evaluation tools, at least the following three levels of evaluation shall have to be recognised:

1. evaluation of pupil performance
2. evaluation of the educational programme
3. evaluation of the work of the school

The pupil and graduate of a specific branch of training are subject to evaluation either as the entities to be taken into account by the curriculum or those who, through their professional accomplishments, will testify most to the adequacy or inadequacy of the developed curriculum of the vocational education.

Evaluation of pupil performance is a regular part of the pedagogic process. It is established by the methodological work of the school and the teachers and forms a separate subject of general and special didactics.

For the purpose of curricular reforms, the evaluation of educational branches (educational programmes) is of key importance.

Seen from the view-point of external performance (effectiveness) of vocational education, the curriculum is evaluated in terms of compliance of the curriculum with the requirements made upon vocational education by the envisaged vocational performance. This compliance can be compromised by:

☐ the vocational education failing to cover adequately all requirements for the vocational performance and the school graduates are given only partial or insufficient qualifications
☐ the professional field for which the pupils are being trained has been unjustifiably narrowed
☐ there occurs undesirable overlapping of training for different vocations (unsuitably broad profession fields)
☐ there exist disproportions between those parts of the education which have been included in the vocational education in view of the envisaged future trends in the profession and those which provide for the direct capability of the graduates to perform on the job
☐ the primary vocational education has become overburdened with subjects belonging to higher levels of vocational education

In terms of internal function (effectiveness) of vocational education, the object of the curriculum evaluation is roughly the same as that of curriculum evaluation at schools providing general education. The curriculum is assessed in terms of its accuracy, methodological and didactic suitability and in terms of its adequacy considering the capabilities for the study of the pupils as well as other conditions of curriculum implementation, in terms of its compatibility with earlier and later education, in terms of the internal consistency of the goals, contents and means of education and other aspects.

The curriculum evaluation undertaken in terms of its internal (didactic) functionality can be accomplished as part of the curriculum development process – having the development and verification function in that case. Alternately, the evaluation can be accomplished as part of the field performance evaluation. In this case, the evaluation performs the control and correction functions. While in the former case, the evaluation takes place mainly in the form of a theoretical analysis whereas it proceeds from empirical data in the latter.

Vocational education curriculum evaluation involves the following four types of evaluation:

☐ development and verification evaluation of the curriculum
☐ control and correction evaluation of the curriculum
☐ theoretical verification of the educational projects
☐ pedagogic and psychological evaluation of the curriculum dedicated to assess its adequacy in terms of the pupils' capability for study

For the development of the evaluation tools in vocational education, the specific features of this type of education must be taken into account such as, in particular, the close links existing between the vocational education system and the national economy and the resulting contribution by the social partners, especially at the employers' and employee organisations to the formulation of the output specifications. In developing the evaluation criteria, a number of other factors must be taken into account, such as:

☐ The purpose of education in the individual branches of training is derived mainly from requirements obtained from outside the sector of education, from the social partners. These partners participate also in the formulation of the educational goals in vocational education. The existing correspondence between the vocational education projects and the external demand for a specific type and kind of education is a major precondition for the functioning and efficiency of vocational education. Therefore this area has been the main field of focus of the curriculum evaluation.
☐ Vocational education must adapt itself flexibly to the changes under way in the professional realm, and must be able to anticipate these changes or at least to respond to them quickly. This requires current evaluation of the vocational education curriculum made in terms of its compliance with the state-of-the-art technologies in the field. The branches of training in vocational education have been conceived as integral entities all parts of which are subordinated to the purpose of education. The individual subjects (or modules) have no autonomy within this unified system. Therefore, the evaluation of the curriculum must apply to the entire education and when considering its individual components, their respective positions and functions within this system must be considered.
☐ Vocational education has been conceived as education including several levels, and one which is accomplished in close to six hundred branches of training. While the educational programmes of these branches feature sections which are applicable to several branches, there are specific sections which apply only for the given branch.

While this has caused technical and organisational problems in evaluation of the curriculum on the one hand, the circumstance has facilitated the evaluation of the 'formal' aspects of the educational programmes of the different branches of training on the other. Moreover, this situation has created favourable conditions for the comparative evaluation of the curricula.

☐ The merits of the curriculum are testified to in a major way by the data on the success rate of the graduates in the different branches of training in practice, the scope of which can be fairly clearly outlined in the case of vocational education. Thereby the potential for application of evaluation of the curriculum in vocational education is significantly broadened.

The evaluation tools are linked also with the system of certifications in vocational education.
The issue of certifications is closely linked with national traditions and customs. In the Czech lands, the traditional certificates in the field of vocational education include the apprentice certificate in apprentice training branches and the maturita certificate in the study branches of secondary vocational schools.

The apprentice certificate is obtained by the graduates of mostly the three-year apprentice branches (exceptionally also those of a small number of two-year branches) if passing the final examination which includes its theoretical and practical parts.

The maturita certificate is obtained by the graduates of four-year (exceptionally five-year) branches of study, or branches of the extension studies.

These certificates declare the capability of the bearer to perform a vocation included in the characteristics of the apprentice or study branches at the scope established by the relevant profile of graduate and attest to the attainment of the educational and professional goals as established by the relevant standards.

Moreover, the maturita certificate attests to its bearer's ability for study at the universities or higher schools provided s/he passes the entrance examinations.

Both types of the output certificates have currently become the subject of extensive discussions in the pedagogic community aimed to re-define and re-specify mainly the educational goals of the maturita examinations which would secure comparable output requirements in different branches of study.

At the level of apprentice training branches, the reconstruction of the final examinations has been under way in pursuance of the newly defined professional standards. The reconstruction has been aimed to establish a system of output demands comparable to those applicable for equivalent professions in the EU countries.

For the design of the new evaluation systems the authors deem also the manner of accreditation of the educational programmes necessary, to be accomplished at the following two levels:

☐ the basic curriculum should be established by law

☐ the accreditation of the school curriculum should be under the competence of the relevant experts (in accordance with the OECD recommendations within the Agency for Curriculum and Certification established)

The completion or implementation of the changes in the evaluation of the quality of education listed below is considered of greatest importance:

☐ independence

☐ active participation of the evaluated school in the process – the evaluation must be based upon the self-assessment of the school
☐ minimisation of any direct impacts of the evaluation outcome for the school
☐ partnership position of all participants, which creates room for open discussion
☐ participation of the social partners in the evaluation process
☐ publication of the evaluation outcome, which applies pressure for the improvement of quality at the schools and promotes their activities in the field of quality assurance
☐ clear-cut objectives of the quality evaluation and of the roles of the different participants, including pre-defined criteria of the methodology assessment

Currently, the assessment of quality of education has been the responsibility of the Czech School Inspectorate. Often, the work of the agency is affected by the lack of clarity of the goals and procedures followed in their operations. This circumstance then impacts unfavourably the way in which external assessment of the quality is viewed by the schools. Therefore, it is necessary that the task of this institution is clarified and its structure and methods of work are shaped accordingly. The CSI has already started the process of the necessary changes.

Other major changes are envisaged to include the support for other independent mechanisms of quality assessment. It is advisable that besides the official assessment of quality, there exist also other assessment mechanisms which can operate with other objectives, criteria and mechanisms. Some can be aimed primarily at the general public while others can assist schools in improving the standard of their services. The plurality of the assessment view-points can serve also to improve the standard of available information and the standard of awareness of both the general public and the schools themselves. However, proper interpretation of the objectives and findings of these assessments must be observed.

Also the improved standard of general public awareness of the quality and work of schools must play a role. For higher efforts in quality assurance it is essential that the general public is adequately kept informed on the standard of the available supply of studies. Besides higher emphasis on the promotion of the findings of the different assessment mechanisms it is proposed that the possibility of broader presentation of educational issues in some mass media be considered. Specifically, it has been proposed that an attempt to initiate the launching of a periodical supplement of one of the dailies is made. The hitherto attentiveness devoted to the issue of education, its products and the discussions on the future developments has been inadequate compared to other countries.

The unification of the system of data acquisition and processing has been another necessary precondition. The growing demands placed upon the planning of the development of schools and the whole system necessitate the availability of data and analyses on the basis of which qualified decisions can be made. Despite major efforts which have been invested, the existing situation is not entirely satisfactory. We believe that the accessibility of basic data must be improved, particularly for schools and that the accuracy of the available data must be improved. In this respect, the ways to lift the technological barriers to further progressive development of data processing and transmission, mainly through the use of up-to-date technologies must be considered.

It is necessary to give support to the management work in the field of planning and assessment of quality at the schools. We believe that in order to improve the quality of work of the schools it is advisable to base the external assessment upon the school's own self-assessment and to promote the further progressive development of the management skills of the schools management by training and experience sharing. The schools network optimisation programme could become a good starting point for further professionalisation of the management work at the schools.

9. TEACHER TRAINING

Teacher training is a highly sensitive issue in the Czech vocational education system.

The qualifications structure and the professional capabilities of teachers at the secondary vocational schools is formally high. Most teachers are university graduates with the required specialisation and teachers of vocational subjects have, to a high percentage, acquired their pedagogic capabilities either at the Faculties of Pedagogy of one of the universities or in pedagogic post-graduate studies.

The high standard of teachers has been also confirmed by the report of the OECD experts stating that the while quality of teacher training is comparable in the Czech Republic with other OECD countries, investments in the quality of the teachers have been inadequate in ensuring that the teachers have the capabilities, motivation and prerequisites necessary to adopt the educational process to the needs of the transforming national economy and the community. Therefore, the Report considers the reform of teacher post-graduate training to be the key element in improving the standard of teacher quality. The team of examiners has arrived at the conclusion that the reform in this area should be considered of primary importance due to the following reasons:

- ☐ the changed situation of the schools as far as concerning their autonomy and range of needs and interests and the changes in the national economy and the community
- ☐ meeting the differentiated individual needs of the teachers and strengthening of their sense of broader professional responsibility can strengthen the attractiveness of the teacher profession
- ☐ the reform of post-graduate studies can be the precursor to the introduction of new profiles of teacher careers and differentiated salaries

According to the examiners, room for current training must be made within the framework of the school development plan which is to include both the priority objectives of the school and the aspect of the broader professional responsibility.

In view of these beliefs, the examiners' team had formulated recommendation No. 10 in which it is proposed that current teacher training is linked with the progressive development of the school and with improvement of their professional prospects.

Besides the above recommendations, the changes in the nature of the teachers' work which are linked with the more dynamic and active approach to the pedagogic work are viewed to be important. These include the active application of activation methods, project work and problem teaching.

The efforts to develop the active thinking of the pupils by problem teaching places considerable demands upon the work of the teacher. The short- and long-term pupils' projects which have been implemented in practice at the pilot schools of the Phare VET programme, and which are given considerable emphasis especially in the later years of study, usually culminate at the pilot schools in the project week at the end of each term. Both the process of formulation of the problem for the pupil's project, its preparation and the process of the project management have placed major demands upon the teacher. Moreover, the pupils should be directed by the teacher to formulate hypotheses and to seek various variants of the solution. It has proved that secondary schools students are not ready for this type of work and the teachers often invest tremendous efforts to seek in the dialogue with the pupil the principles and strategies for solving the problem and the available variants of the solution.

In incorporating the key skills within the scope of topics of the different subjects, the pilot schools teachers have found group approaches to problem solving more efficient than frontal class teaching. Likewise, some non-traditional forms and methods such as staging methods, language games and public presentations have proved also helpful. While key skills have been reflected in the school curriculum at all pilot schools, it was not everywhere that the school have succeeded in expanding the key skills into a more demanding methodological procedures.

The emphasis in the education process thus shifts away form the traditional transmission teaching towards activation and partnership teaching which has been one of the basic requirements of the Phare VET project. For most teachers, these are non-traditional and novel approaches which they have not yet deployed in practice to any greater degree and ones which they should be made ready for in a timely and proper manner, although their theoretical understanding of these new approaches is fairly good.

The training of teachers for the changing conditions in the sphere of the national economy and mainly their life-long education is thus becoming a major and open problem which should be addressed in a systematic way.

The majority of formerly used tools of teacher education have either totally disintegrated or their position has weakened considerably. The Central Institute for the Education of

Pedagogic Workers as well as most regional Pedagogic Institutes which have found it impossible to adapt to the new conditions have been dissolved. The Research Institute for Engineering Studies with the Czech Technical University (CVUT) which awarded pedagogic accreditation to graduates of technical universities has ceased to exist. Nowadays, the full brunt of accreditation in the field of pedagogic capability has been borne mainly by the Faculties of Pedagogy and the Teacher Departments of the universities which are often inadequately staffed to meet this demanding challenge.

An even worse situation exists in the area of life-long teacher education. This issue is extremely important, particularly, with teachers of vocational subjects. Their pedagogic activities are inseparably linked with the economic sphere. As this has recently undergone changes at an unprecedented pace, mere monitoring of these developments and their up-to-date implementation in the educational process often happen to be beyond the powers and capabilities of the teachers alone.

Therefore it is considered a priority for teacher education that a strategy for the development of the teacher education system within the framework of the overall progressive development of the whole educational system is formulated.

This recommendation is fully in keeping with the recommendations of the OECD experts.

The proposal for the strategy of development of the teacher education system can be successful only provided the Ministry of Education is convinced unequivocally that the quality of teachers plays truly the key role in the educational process and that it secures the implementation of some of the motivation and activation factors, such as:

❑ the creation of a nation-wide system of professional and pedagogic training of teachers which would ensure the comparability of pedagogic and didactic standards of teacher education regardless of the type of university or university department in question

❑ the establishment of a new and differentiated system of pay increases for the teachers. It will be necessary that this system includes motivation barriers preventing professional teachers to leave the sector for better paid jobs in the commercial sphere (such as currently happens often with teachers of languages, economy and computer experts)

❑ the creation of new attractive educational and pay conditions for the teacher professions means only one side conductive of the desirable changes, the other being the teachers themselves. Without their active participation and interest no changes can be brought about

For the promotion of the life-long active approach of the teachers towards their vocation, we believe that it is advisable to put in place a system of professional and pedagogic attestations (the most widely shared views considering two attestation degrees). The passing of the attestation would be the necessary prerequisite for the higher pay category.

❑ for teachers of vocational subjects we believe that it is necessary to establish a system of periodic practical training or study stays in the corporate sphere which would be a sort of guarantee for their continued professional growth and contact with the current development in the technologies in their field

The contemplated change in the curricular policy which is clearly bound to transfer a major part of the teacher's responsibility onto the school curricula and school-specific educational programmes, will necessarily result also in new demands placed upon the teachers.

The existing teacher education system has been totally lacking in elements catering to the development and production of teaching literature such as university scripts, textbooks, handbooks, tests, etc. This problem requires a completely new teacher qualification for which the teachers had never been trained properly. Therefore, the budgets of the Ministry of Education with their drastically cut textbook expenditures should include additional expenditure items for the activation of teacher education in this field. So far, such literature has been developed at the schools by experienced teachers working intuitively and at considerable expenditure of time and money by the school. Although the pilot schools' teachers have been in a somewhat more advantageous position, as there are only 19 pilot schools out of the total number of 1568, the situation must be addressed presently.

MANAGEMENT/ FINANCING/ SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

Jaromír COUFALÍK

INTRODUCTION

The Czech VET system has changed in the first half of 1990s. The change was triggered by a fundamental turn-about in the social and economic environment in which the system operates. The content of education was adapted to a new, rapid development in the employment structure. The VET offer was enhanced by new types of vocational schools and new vocations. When assessing the development of VET systems in general, such changes are referred to as modernisation.

Apart from that, other changes can be observed in the Czech VET system. Decision making mechanisms were modified, schools being given larger competence, as well as competence being shifted on both the national and regional levels. The changes of competence hand in hand with a change in the status of vocational schools as well as an introduction of new ways of financing has resulted in the development of a different structure of educational clusters and structure of students taking part in VET. Such changes are usually referred to as structural changes. Structural changes though include also other phenomena, such as the implementation of national standards or a shift from input control to output control. The Czech VET system has not dealt with these changes yet. Therefore, in summary we can say that the Czech VET system has gone through the modernisation phase, as well as part of the structural changes phase.

There is yet another phase recognised in the development of VET systems, which is referred to as system reform. It can be characterised by adapting the VET system to the demands of a changing socio-economic system. It is related to the inner logic of an educational system, in particular to its relationship with an employment system. As far as Central and Eastern European countries are concerned, the system reform refers to the need to change VET, which was formerly based on guaranteed and stable employment, to VET accepting an uncertain and unstable employment and labour market on one the hand, but on the other hand contributing to the stability of employment. System reform includes also organisational and institutional changes, especially as far as system control and an the establishment of effective communication between VET and employment is concerned. Together with these changes, the reform also entails expectations and behavior changes of individuals and institutions connected with VET and employment.

The Czech VET system now has a chance to further progress on the road determined by the three above mentioned phases. Either it will finalise the structural changes and enter the system reform phase, or it will stagnate and start to lag behind.

To be able to progress further, it is necessary to initiate other changes which would fulfil the remaining demands of the structural changes and at least some demands typical for system reform. What should the other changes of the Czech VET system deal with? At least three issues should be considered, which can be expressed by the words the flexibility of VET, its quality and decentralisation of competence in its management.

Flexible VET takes into account changes in the labour market and employment, with the need for further education in the productive stage of life of every individual, and it has an inherent ability to adapt to the work content development as well as regional differences in needs. To be able to call the Czech VET system flexible, it will be necessary to change its current state by, for example, introducing a flexible system of vocational clusters and national educational standards, based on which variable educational programmes could be developed, and simultaneously make the VET more relevant to the needs of employers. Each of these measures will require demanding preparation, the conviction of all parties involved, and a complicated process of implementation in school practice.

A requirement to focus on the quality of VET stems from the general stress put on quality of all processes that want to succeed in an environment of growing competitiveness. Both national and international context is concerned. Compared to requirements of high quality materials, technologies, and products, in the case of VET, the quality of an individual and his/her development is concerned, this is the decisive factor of economic growth and social development. Focusing on the quality of VET will involve the implementation of demanding educational standards as well as the development and implementation of systems of accreditation, certification, monitoring and evaluation of VET results. It will result in higher requirements on the assessment of VET outputs. It is also related to the above mentioned requirement of VET to be relevant to the needs of employers and the labour market.

Decentralisation of competence in VET management should pick up on the already increased powers of individual schools and should now deal with shifting certain competence from the national to the regional level. It is justified not only by the generally recognised subsidiary principle, but also by the two above mentioned requirements (flexibility and quality) which the current procedures can not satisfactorily guarantee. It is also related to issues such as decision-making on the structure of VET, school network and allocation of funds etc.

The above mentioned crucial aspects, that should be focused on in the next phase, are typical characteristics of developed VET systems. When promoting these characteristics, we can learn from other countries, in which they have already been implemented. Such foreign elements though should not be adopted without thorough consideration, because in many cases they were designed for different economic and social conditions. The core of the current Czech VET structure should be adhered to since it addresses the Czech conditions and enables further improvements. Modifications should be tailored to the specific conditions of the Czech Republic.

Efforts to improve VET under current socio-economic as well as political conditions represent no longer only partial changes in the educational system, but have become a question of how great an importance will be attached to education in society in general. It is evident in other activities on the EU level, that the effort is aimed at a shift toward a learning society characteristic for the 21st century.

The goal of this synthetic paper is to summarise major results of the work done over the past years in the area of VET in the Czech Republic, and recommend priorities for VET policy for the years to come together with major ways of implementing such a policy.

In recent years, VET in the Czech Republic has gone through a phase which has had certain positive aspects but on the other hand certain problems have even worsened. Thus, a number of research and analytic activities were carried out and new approaches were tested. Simultaneously, the Czech VET has been evaluated by foreign experts. Many specific results have been achieved in recent years through the Phare VET Reform Programme, too. Now the time has come to make use of all these results in defining a VET policy.

VET is large and complex, which can be judged from various viewpoints, and in which the individual components can be observed. Many studies and reports discuss precisely these viewpoints and components, which now need to be summarised, assessed and the most important ones selected, based on a systemic, unifying approach to present VET as one unit. More precisely expressed, this synthetic paper focuses especially on systemic aspects of VET, taking into consideration that other aspects, related to the actual process of VET (classroom aspects), will be discussed in a different synthetic paper, even when – of course – the classroom and system aspects are closely connected to each other.

As the VET policy needs to have a perspective, this synthetic paper focuses on the future in particular. To have the recommendations for the future period of time based on reality rather than just being a vision of a fantasy, at least a quick look must be taken at the former and current period. Therefore the paper is often based on and refers to trends. The trends represent the current development which could, but does not have to continue into the future. The core of this paper addresses specifically a question of how and why the current trends should proceed into the future.

This synthetic paper is structured into several parts. After an introduction, some systemic aspects of VET will be looked at, such as for example VET management, the participation of social partners, financing and legislation and in connection with these also quality control. When discussing the individual aspects, we will first consider current trends in the Czech Republic together with analogous trends abroad, especially in EU member states. Then we will recommend future priorities and ways of implementing them, making use of the results of the work carried out by both Czech and foreign experts within the Phare VET Reform Programme, as well as results of other work done outside this programme. Priorities that stem from the monitored systemic aspects are summarised in the final part of this paper.

1. SYSTEMIC ASPECTS OF VET

1.1 VET management

Management in general always relates to power and decision-making. This applies also to VET. In relation to this, it is always necessary to ask a question of the content of decision-making power and how the decision-making powers are distributed among individual levels of management, and among individual management participants. Simultaneously, management fulfils certain specific functions, such as the definition of objectives, resources allocation, monitoring, quality assurance, assessment and the development of the system that is being managed. To what extent these functions are fulfilled in VET depends also on the way it is managed.

In the majority of countries, the content and scope of state responsibilities were revised. A direction of this significant trend can be expressed in words such as decentralisation, de-concentration and deregulation. An analysis of the international context proves that these reforms are not – in general – aimed at weakening the national level of VET management, but rather at its adaptation to the complex conditions of educational systems, and thus at its increased effectiveness. These efforts do not make the state weaker than before, but make it fulfil its functions in a different way. In other words, the state fulfils in general the same functions, but utilises different measures. It can also be noticed in trends manifested in the fulfilment of state functions in VET.

As for the quality assurance of (educational) services, in democratic countries the state is considered generally responsible for these services, and must protect their quality in favour of those using the services, no matter who the provider is. Another assumption is that not every and each process within the system needs to be directly controlled. The state does not have to exercise the control directly, but can develop tools and mechanisms to replace its direct interventions. Therefore accreditation and other institutions and mechanisms were developed out of state bodies in a number of countries.

To ensure efficient utilisation of public resources, the state does not have to directly supervise the educational processes, either. The state can implement mechanisms which more or less will automatically ensure efficiency. Therefore most VET reforms introduced market-based competition principles to education.

To ensure comparability of national educational systems with international standards, is a very important aspect of VET reforms, as well. This is apparent in particular in EU member states, where in relation to eliminating barriers in international mobility of labour force, the countries´ educational systems must comply with EU regulations. At the same time, the countries must adjust their systems to recognise foreign certificates and awards. Again, this does not mean that the state must exercise direct control. The solution is rather to sign bilateral mutual agreements on the level of institutions.

The state is also responsible for adjusting the educational system to changing economic and social conditions, i. e. it is responsible for the modernisation of the system. Direct state interventions are being abandoned while on the other hand states are attempting to develop adaptable system capacities by, for example, supporting research and innovations, creating a larger and more flexible legal frame, supporting contacts between progressive institutions and superior companies and supporting valuable development projects etc.

The efforts to ensure internal coherence of a system and its relationships with other social subsystems can be impaired by disproportional development of some VET aspects, due to bad coordination with other factors. This is true in cases when, for example, a formal educational system neglects the development of vocational skills, or when the decentralisation of an educational system and other areas is unbalanced.

To manage VET, European countries utilise one of the three following models: where VET is a part of an educational system, state institutions are responsible for its management. In countries where industrial companies play a major role in VET, the responsibility of state institutions is smaller. The third model combines the first two. The Czech Republic utilises the first model. The trend has so far been to strengthen the role of state institutions. It is evident in, for example, having introduced the system of so called state apprenticeship, and having shifted the powers in VET to the Ministry of Education. Compared to EU member states, the Czech Republic is an exception with its responsibilities for VET management concentrated in state institutions.

The level of VET management centralisation represents another perspective from which the management can be evaluated. The management of VET is more centralised in countries, where state institutions traditionally have played a leading role, unlike countries, where companies have had the major say. From this perspective the management of VET in the Czech Republic can be considered as highly centralised.

Trends as well as other aspects of VET management can be in a suitable way analysed from the perspective of individual levels of management: national, regional and school level.

As far as VET management is concerned, two main questions are considered on the national level: first of all the distribution of competence, and secondly the contents of competence. As for the first question, the distribution of managerial competence among individual state bodies (Ministries) is considered, as well as the share of state bodies (governmental), non-governmental bodies and municipalities.

Looking at foreign countries, it is evident that competencies in VET are always in various ways distributed across the number of Ministries involved. The Ministry of Education is involved in all cases, then often the Ministry of Labour, and certain economic ministries such as the Ministry of Industry. An advantage of having the Ministry of Education is that it possesses a larger share of the competencies and with them lies an opportunity (at least theoretical) to create better conditions for an integrated policy of human resources development. At the same time it will create more effective barriers to prevent VET from undesirable specialisation. Ministries of Education are in some cases considered more open towards longer-term approaches and perspective development, compared to economic ministries which usually work under a greater time pressure resulting from the urgency of problems they must solve.

The majority of western European countries do not grant the Ministry of Education large managerial competencies in VET, because it inclines to neglect the aspects of VET. The staff at the Ministry has often been recruited from among teachers and does not have the desirable relationship for economic policies and aspects of employment. They are also less capable of developing good professional contacts with participants representing the world of work. Therefore, the Ministry of Education is often given competencies for the initial VET, exercised within the educational system, while competencies for further VET are given to other Ministries. Since it is often difficult to distinguish between these two parts of VET, almost every western European country has established inter-resort state organisations which should first of all help improve communication among the Ministries involved, and secondly enable the social partners to be involved in decision-making concerning VET.

Analysis of the distribution of competencies on the national level point out, that the work style of Ministries involved differs, too. The Ministry of Education inclines to use rather directive managerial methods, unlike the economic Ministries, which cannot (or should not) use these managerial methods toward companies to such an extent. As to further (lifelong) VET, it plays an increasing role in the economies of western European countries, there is a trend to establish specific authorities, which are on the government level responsible for continuing VET, mainly in relation to the support of employment and limiting unemployment.

Another trend in western European countries, which is even more apparent, is the strengthening of the role of non-governmental organisations that are responsible for a part of VET, as well as for standards and for VET quality assurance. One or a number of Ministries usually supervise such organisations, where social partners are often represented, too. It shows that the problem of competencies does not concern only the content and distribution of decision-making powers but also the ways of how this power is executed. The point is whether the decision on a level is made autonomously or the decision maker is obliged to consult his decision with a superior or other body.

A comparison of trends in VET management in the Czech Republic and abroad brings several conclusions.

On the national level, competencies for VET were concentrated on the Ministry of Education. Neither before nor after this step was undertaken, was there no governmental or non-governmental organisation on the national level, which would deal with VET, and in which all governmental bodies involved as well as social partners would be represented. A dissolution of the Apprentice Training Administration narrowed the number of institutions and activities supporting VET. The accreditation mechanism, that could contribute to VET quality assurance, is provided for by the staff at the Ministry of Education, which unnecessarily drains off their capacity. Work being done on educational standards mainly on the VET Research Institute initiative, is only in the form of a proposal at the Ministry of Education. In consequence of the actually non-existence of the regional level of VET management, a too large share of operative and partial work is performed by the Ministry of Education. There has not been any attempt as of yet to find a unified approach to interconnect the initial and continuing VET, having all governmental as well as non-governmental organisations involved. An effective system of communication between VET and employment has not been introduced yet. Tools and mechanisms for effective monitoring and evaluation of VET have not been implemented either. Priorities for further development of VET have not been determined yet. Neither has a concept for VET development been drafted, which is essential both to improve the situation in the country and in relation to planned entry into the EU.

Therefore it is recommended to focus further activities, undertaken on the national level of VET management, on two priorities: to establish the National Board of VET, and to develop a VET policy for a future period of several years.

The National Board of VET should be an authority in which the Ministries of Education, Labour and Social Affairs, Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, and Regional Development should be represented, as well as the Confederation of Industry and Transportation, the Czech and Moravian Chambers of Trade Unions, the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic, and possibly other institutions. The Board should be an advisory body to the Minister of Education or his/her deputy for VET. Its major task should be to assess recommended concepts for further development of VET drafted by the Ministry of Education, and initiate recommendations for further improvement of VET.

Establishing the Board of VET would not alter the current powers and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education, but the Board's work could help delegate some of the current competencies and activities of the Ministry to other or newly established institutions. One of the first tasks the Board should undertake, is to discuss the draft VET policy for a future period of time. It would be appropriate to form an executive body of the Board, e. g. a transformed VET Research Institute. The power in the field of accreditation of newly implemented vocations or in the field of external quality control of schools could be given as examples of the power of this executive body. Besides powere of decision this body should more intensively deal with the monitoring and analyses of VET development which could help to enhance decision making on all management levels.

A draft VET policy for a future period of time should deal with the issues, that are stated in the conclusions of this paper.

The regional level forms the second level of VET management. Countries and their experts consider this level to be extremely important for a number of reasons. First of all, the regional level is considered most suitable to combine the labour market needs and VET institutions outputs. Both quantitative (number of individuals) and qualitative (structure according to clusters and levels of education) perspective is considered.

Administration, the establishment and planning of VET institutions is most effectively performed on the regional level. Together with the local level, it is the most suitable place, where discussions between representatives of schools and companies can be held. It is the most suitable level for schools to find information on educational needs, and to recommend new educational programmes.

The importance of the regional level also stems from the fact, that individual regions have different economic and therefore work profiles. While on the national level, such regional differences impair any rational discussions on educational outputs, on the regional level such discussions can be most rational. On the regional level, effective discussions on the desirable structure of vocational clusters can be held, and the best solutions for the integration and co-ordination of partial requirements can be found. As far as discussions on the support of regional development within the EU are concerned, the regional level is considered to be the decisive one as well.

Three types of institutions are most common on the regional level of VET management: decentralised regional offices of the state bodies, regionally elected political bodies, and autonomous non-political economic organisations. In some countries, the regional level of management is applied in different forms in general and vocational education.

Regional VET management authorities have not been established in the Czech Republic yet. The existing district school authorities fulfil only a small number of functions, that should be fulfilled by the regional VET management authorities. Apart from that, a district can be suitable for the management of general education, but is too small an area for the management of VET. A comparison of the sizes of regions used for management of VET in the Czech Republic and abroad has shown, that in foreign countries a population of such a region is often 500,000 and more, while in the Czech Republic it is approximately 120,000. The non-existence of a regional level of management in the Czech Republic has caused the uncoordinated development of a network of vocational schools and their fragmentation, consequences of which will be eliminated only with difficulties.

Therefore, the next priority is to establish regional VET authorities. These should be located in headquarters of administrative regions which are to be established in the Czech Republic, but due to political reasons, the actual step is still being postponed. A possible solution could be to locate the regional VET authorities in the headquarters of former regions, and adjust their network only after the administrative regions are established. These authorities should be formed by transforming some of the school authorities, which would eliminate the need for additional resources.

The regional VET authorities should have decision-making powers and responsibilities, and should be subordinate either to the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, or the Ministry for Regional Development. The competencies of such authorities should include the network of vocational schools of all types, functions of the founder of these schools, the co-ordination of quantitative, vocational and educational structure of students, optimisation of this structure in relation to the educational needs of the region, and allocation of financial resources to individual vocational schools. Heads of the regional VET authorities should be obliged to establish Regional Boards of VET, where regional administrative and self-administrative bodies, as well as social partners would be represented. Such a board would give an opinion on the proposals for the modification of the school network and an amount and structure of students. It should be involved also in the quality control of schools within its competencies.

The third level of VET management is the school level. An increase in the institutional autonomy of individual schools has been one of the most common tendencies in the management of education in general. Schools have become legal entities, they are often prompted to take over responsibilities for their own success, they were also made responsible for the management of their resources including property, financial resources, educational programmes and human resources. Some schools have tendencies to introduce organisational structures similar to structures used in companies. One of the concepts of institutional autonomy puts stress on the professional autonomy of teachers, another concept points out the similarity of educational institutions and companies, referring to the fact that both operate on the market.

Tendencies to expand the autonomy of schools entail a number of consequences. Schools are prompted to formulate their own strategies for further development, often in the form of a public document. Boards are being established under the schools´ management, and in some countries such boards were given decision-making powers. Schools are also prompted to develop their own educational programmes or elaborate on national programmes, with respect to local needs. The expanded autonomy of schools has increased the need and importance of the external evaluation of schools, and the development of appropriate methods and techniques. There is a tendency to develop such evaluation on professional bases, and involve independent participants. Profiles of vocational schools are being extended, both vocational clusters (horizontal level) and level of education (vertical level) being concerned. The structure of students is being changed, the share of adults being educated is increasing in particular. Schools management is developing as well as courses dedicated to acquisition and development of specific managerial skills.

A comparison of the Czech Republic with general trends shows, that the relatively smallest differences are on the school level of VET management. This is probably a reflection of the fact, that in past years the emphases of reform efforts were on the school level. Therefore we find it unnecessary to recommend any fundamental changes on this level of management. We recommend only one change, which results from the statement that headmasters of vocational schools were given a number of new powers, but their responsibilities did not increase accordingly. School headmasters are responsible for complying with regulations and for the utilisation of financial resources, but their responsibilities are unclear in areas such as school development, strategies for further development, and quality of education. Therefore, we recommend that headmasters of vocational schools should respond to the above mentioned Regional VET authorities. Managerial training should be a common requirement for headmasters of vocational schools, because while pedagogical functions can be delegated, managerial functions, which are increasingly important, cannot. The establishment of a School Board should remain optional, but in all cases, local social partners, employers in particular, should have their representatives on such a Board, if established.

1.2 Social partnership

The development of VET in the Czech Republic has so far been influenced mainly by participants from the area of education. While at the beginning of 1990s especially the apprenticeship was an important part of the VET system and was therefore interconnected with companies in many ways, the first steps of economic reform broke these links by separating the vocational schools from the privatised companies, and establishing a new category of so called state apprentices. The percentage of state apprentices has been growing ever since, and apprentices, whose training is linked to companies, are only exceptions. Apart from consequences, that this development had on the area of VET financing, which will be discussed in the next section of this document, the disconnection of links between apprenticeship and companies resulted in the adverse development of the structure of vocations in apprentices training. While at the beginning the demand for individual vocations was determined mainly by the companies, this role was later taken over by applicants themselves (and their parents), whose expectations and perspectives differ from those of the companies. In secondary technical schools, where links to companies have traditionally been weak, the demand for individual vocations was as well determined primarily by applicants, or their parents.

Vocational schools were trying to meet the demands of the applicants, and the existing system of financing supported their efforts. The structure of vocations, insufficiently influenced by companies, gradually drifted away from the needs of companies, and this situation has not changed so far. The labour market suffers from a lack of graduates from technical vocations, areas of engineering and construction in particular. Some companies therefore began to import workers in certain professions from abroad.

Insufficient interconnection with companies is evident not only in the structure of graduates from vocational schools, but also in the quality of VET. The majority of the currently used curricula have been developed in accordance with the schools´ perspectives and demands, and as such do not guarantee, that the quality of graduates is relevant to the demands of employers. Should this development continue, the quality of VET might be jeopardised.

While at the beginning of 1990s the weakening of links between companies and vocational schools was justified by an unfavorable economic situation, and the state ensured continuity of apprenticeship by establishing the so called state apprenticeship, the current situation is different. The companies are consolidated to a larger extent. Expanding companies in particular, consider the lack of graduates from vocational schools to be the major barrier in their further development. There is a growing fear that the training for some vocations could disappear completely. Therefore in recent years the interest of companies in VET has been growing. This is a favourable situation to introduce radical measures which will guarantee, that the scope, structure, and quality of VET will be relevant to demands of applicants and schools as well as to the employers.

A comparison of the Czech Republic with EU member states clearly shows a substantial difference: while in western European countries, the involvement of social partners in VET is quite common, the level of involvement of social partners in the Czech Republic is insufficient. Even though there are cases, where schools and companies co-operate on the school level, these are mostly just coincidental consultations focused on partial issues related to curricula. The co-operation is neither systematic nor is its content focused on all relevant questions.

Until recently, the insufficient involvement of social partners used to be justified by their lack of interest and the fact, that institutional and other structures needed for their involvement had not been established yet. That might have been true a few years ago, but does not reflect the reality today. Therefore the time has come to develop and implement effective participation of social partners on influencing policies of VET, including the continuing vocational education.

Just as in western European countries, the involvement of major social partners concerns, i. e. employers, and employees (represented by trade unions). These social partners need to be involved on all three levels of management. To implement this intention into practice is considered to be another priority for the future period of VET development.

On a national level, the social partners need to be represented on the recommended National Board of VET. As the structure of authorities representing employers in the Czech Republic is a very specific one, we recommend having a number of institutions represented on the Board, e. g. the Confederation of Industry and Transportation, the Association of Entrepreneurs in Construction, the Chamber of Commerce of the Czech Republic, the Agrarian Chamber of the Czech Republic. We recommend that employees should be represented on the Board by the Czech and Moravian Chamber of Trade Unions. Together with representatives of state authorities, the National Board of VET would comply with the usual requirements on tripartite representation.

A work group focused on the education of apprentices training has been in recent years operating under the Board of Dialogue among Social Partners, and recently has extended their scope of interest onto secondary technical schools. Therefore a question arises, whether this particular work group should not be transformed into the National Board of VET. We recommend establishing a new Board, where some members of the above mentioned work group could certainly work as well. The major reason for this recommendation is the need to establish a body, the main function of which would be to jointly develop a policy of VET. To reach this goal, the new body needs to be established, which would not carry a burden of the present approaches of the work group.

Being represented on the National Board of VET, social partners should exercise their influence on VET policies. Apart from a proposal of the VET policy for future period, social partners should influence other important measures as well, in particular the drafting of new regulations modifying VET, educational standards and their relationship to occupational standards, changes in the system of VET financing and VET evaluation, etc. The social partners should considerably influence the continuing VET.

The involvement of social partners in VET policy requires ensuring their participation not only in horizontal dimension (e. g. on the national, regional and local level) but also in vertical dimension, i. e. in the main sectors. The sectoral structure of the social partners in VET reflects on the one hand the sectoral structure of the economy in a country and on the other hand the classification of VET vocations. Although these structures are different in individual countries, the break-up into approximately 20 sectors (e. g. agriculture, construction, electrotechnology) is used mostly. There are usually enterprise associations and sectoral trade unions which are members of either national or sectoral confederations. While representatives of employers and trade union confederations should be represented in the National Board of VET and should plead for the general interests of employers and employees, the representatives of sectoral associations should plead for the specific interests of their sector. These interests have to do especially with the qualifications, curricula, quality control and certification in the relevant sector. It will be possible to identify the sectoral partners in the Czech Republic because the relevant negotiations about it are already in progress.

One of most significant reasons for the involvement of social partners in the VET policy is the relationship of VET to employment. The share of pro-active employment policy expenditures in the total employment support expenditures is decreasing in the Czech Republic. It neither corresponds to the necessity for long-term employment policy concept with more significant responsibility and participation of social partners nor to the necessary increasing role of pro-active employment policy in connection with joining to European structures. The affection of the VET vocations structure could be one of concrete examples of pro-active employment policy. This affection can not be effective without the participation of the social partners.

Having social partners represented on the National Board of VET will create conditions, under which they will be able to influence VET. On the other hand it will also be a challenge for them to intensify certain activities, that should have already been undertaken. Involvement of social partners in VET will be an important sign in assessing the comparability of the Czech Republic to foreign countries. Social partners though will have to ensure a sufficiently professional approach to VET issues.

Social partners should be involved on the regional level, too. We recommend appointing representatives of employers and employees (trade unions) to the above proposed regional VET authorities, which would for the time being be located in the capital cities of former regions. Employers and trade unions should delegate their representatives to the boards. On the regional level, social partners should thus influence further specification and implementation of VET policy, that has been discussed on the National Board of VET. Therefore, on the regional level, social partners should have large competencies as well.

On the school level (local) we have already recommended, that school headmasters should establish School Boards, on which the social partners should also be represented. Even though the Board's establishment would be optional, we assume that it will exist in most vocational schools. As far as the social partners are concerned, the Board will be unique in a number of aspects. As for employers, the representatives should be from key companies, local or from the nearest surroundings, that are the major employers of graduates. Trade unions should be represented by a delegated member, who would simultaneously be working in a school, because his/her role should be analogous to that of a trade union's representative in a company. On the local level, unlike state or regional, apart from municipalities, parents (and possibly students) should also be represented on the School Boards.

1.3 Financing

VET financing is one of the key issues of VET policy in all countries. In most countries, VET is partially financed from the state budget, and the annual amount of funds allocated to VET is the subject of many strenuous discussions. Even though there is no unified way of financing VET, there are common trends and elements identifiable in western European countries.

Similar to the VET management systems, financing is undergoing decentralisation as well, which is demonstrated in the increasing participation of regional and possibly local authorities in financing. This trend however exists in a situation, where local authorities can utilise local tax revenues to finance VET, which is further influenced by the fact that the municipality or an association of municipalities is often the owner or founder of a vocational school.

In many countries, the amount of funds depends on the number of students. This system is in the Czech Republic referred to as per-capita financing. Some countries at the same time attempt to rationalise the financing by expanding the schools and diversifying the structure of their students. Prevailing systems of financing also operate with other resources than just the state budget, in particular employers´ resources, and also resources from the labour and employment resort. The common way is to have the theoretical part of education financed by the state. Often, employers are motivated by tax incentives, which are favourable to companies that do participate on VET financing. Some of these systems of financing were even recommended to the Czech Republic by the OECD and other experts.

The current system of VET financing in the Czech Republic is demonstrated in the pilot schools, which participate in the Phare VET Reform programme. This sample of schools represents every type of a vocational school, with one exception of the recently introduced higher professional schools. Analysis has shown that this sample of schools properly captures the general situation in VET financing.

The total number of students in the pilot schools has remained approximately on the same

level in recent years, only secondary vocational schools and private schools have experienced a slight decrease, due to the implementation of the ninth grade into primary schools, which was put into effect during the 1996/97 school year. The structure of students in relation to the level of education has been altered: the share of students in training vocations has been decreasing. Even though the percentage (and number) of students in training vocations has been decreasing, the number of vocations taught in all types of vocational schools has been growing. This invokes worries that the quality of teaching has been deteriorating, because schools were hardly able to ensure necessary personnel and material preconditions to guarantee quality of teaching in so many vocations. An increasing number of vocations combined with a roughly stagnating number of students leads to a decrease in an average number of students per one vocation.
A typical feature of the apprentice structure development is a rapid increase in a percentage of the so called state apprentices, whose training is fully financed by the state, and on the other hand a rapid decrease in the percentage (and number) of apprentices, whose training is partially financed by companies. The percentage of state apprentices in pilot schools has jumped in the last 5 years from approx. 30% to approx. 95 %. In private schools, the growth has been significantly slower. The growing number of state apprentices has resulted in the rapid growth of state budget expenditures, on the other hand it does not sufficiently cover real total costs incurred. This is evident of operational costs, which have been stagnating in last few years, which again invokes fears that the quality of VET is deteriorating.

The largest expense item from total expenses spent on VET are the salaries of teachers and other school staff. Even though the total number of students stagnates, the number of teachers is growing. As the business activities of schools, which are one of the sources of financing, are decreasing in number, the staff that used to be responsible for them is decreasing in number as well.

A development of a ratio, that indicates the value of a school's property per one student is alarming as well. This ratio among others indicates the amount and value of a school's equipment, that is being used for teaching, and in almost one half of the schools it has been decreasing. The fact, that investments in teaching aids, devices, and equipment are minimal, only intensifies our worries. The value of the schools´ buildings accounts for an ever increasing share in the property/student ratio. But even the buildings are aging as indicates the value, that has already been depreciated. Approximately one third of the pilot schools own buildings, 50% of the value of which have already been depreciated. One half of them has a reproduction period longer than 30 years.

Foreign experts have expressed their opinions on VET in the Czech Republic, and these opinions are incorporated in the Strategic Study (1993), and the OECD Report (1996). They have concluded that expenses on VET in the Czech Republic quintupled in the period of 1989-1994, but since the growth was faster than in other parts of the educational system, there are worries that this trend is not sustainable. The OECD experts regard the governmental opinion that the state is main guarantor for the quality of apprenticeship as unrealistic. They believe that it would be necessary to implement incentives by preference of enterprises participating in apprentices training. The experts also stressed that our system of financing does not operate with any motivational stimuli related to efficiency. In relation to the developments in total number of teachers, total costs and wages expenses, the experts recommended moving move from a system of a large number of teachers, not always fully utilised and getting lower wages, to a system of a smaller number of teachers, with more versatile skills and better paid, with greater emphasis on the increased efficiency of their work.

As a part of the efforts to identify new sources of financing of VET outside the state budget, the experts suggested introducing tax incentives for companies that invest in VET. In relation to specific vocational training (i. e. practical training of apprentices), they recommended, that this training could be financed by companies or the Ministry of Labour.

Analysis of VET financing carried out up to now indicates, that the current problems are manifested on one the hand in sustaining pressure to increase the state budget expenditures, but on the other hand in not always efficient ways of spending those funds. The major causes of these problems in VET financing include the inefficient network of vocational schools, too big an offer of vocations and study subjects, too large a share of state apprentices, and low diversification of founders of vocational schools.

The first and second causes are interrelated. A rapid increase in the number of vocational schools (during 1990–1995 almost by one half) has resulted in a decrease in the average size of school, and therefore less efficient usage of funds allocated from the state budget. An expected population development will bring along a decrease in a total number of students and thus even larger unused capacities of vocational schools. The maintenance and administration of school's capacities, that are not being used, will increase the danger of inefficient utilisation of funds. Should the problems of the inefficient network of schools and over-capacitated offer of vocations not be solved, they might in the future cause further financial losses and the deterioration of the quality of VET.

Therefore the modification of network of vocational schools should be a part of the VET policy, and lay grounds for a decrease in the number of vocational schools, number of employees working in those schools, and an increase in the utilisation of the schools´ capacities. A clarification of the educational offer of individual schools should be a part of the modification of their network as well. The Ministry of Education has already started the modification. Even though the number of students in schools represents an important criterion, it should not be the only one taken into consideration. Economic criteria – besides pedagogical ones – should play an important role as well, but in schools of identical size and with identical vocational clusters, they can lead to different results. Schools that will show a healthy utilisation of funds, and management of which will be able to gain other funds, should remain in operation. An important criterion should also be a requirement to retain the possibility of education in vocations, a demand for which has been low so far, but the current situation on the labour market indicates, that it can be expected to grow.

It also means that the social partners, and representatives of employment offices and municipalities should participate in the modification of the network of vocational schools. The regional level should be the focal point of all decision-making. One possible way could be to use economic measures, within which the Ministry of Education decides on the amount of funds that will be allocated to individual regions in future years, and leaves it up to the representatives of regions to decide on the modification of the network of schools in their regions. The modification should be finalised by 1998.

Another crucial problem of VET financing is the high percentage of state apprentices. Even though we are discussing the problem of state apprentices in a section on financing, the financial dimension is not the only one concerned. The problem is also related to the quality of education. When employers get involved in VET, there is a better guarantee that it will be relevant to their needs, unlike a situation where there is an anonymous employer, and we cannot expect a direct influence on the process of education of individual students or small groups of students. The fact that to organize VET in cooperation with companies is more difficult than without their involvement, probably plays a role as well. Quality control of VET is better, when there is a co-operation with companies than in the case of the anonymous employer. It is probable, that increasing emphasis on the quality of VET is accompanied by the expansion of apprentices training, which is happening in western Europe.

It is not fair to say, that businesses are not interested in getting high-quality graduates from vocational schools. They are not willing to express their interests in the current situation, when they are neither motivated to participate in VET, nor have sufficient guarantees that their possible investments in VET will generate any benefits. To be able to decrease the number of state apprentices, we recommend simultaneously implementing several measures. The recommended set of measures are also considered to be another priority of VET policy for the future.

The first part of the measures should involve the implementation of reduced per-capita payments used to finance the practical training of the state apprentices. This would make the state apprentices training less attractive for vocational schools. The amount of funds, the state spends on the training of apprentices, would be reduced as well. The second part of the measures would involve a change in the organisation of the allocation of the per-capita payments, used to finance the practical training of state apprentices. As a result of the change, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the employment offices would be those providing the per-capita payments. The reason for this is, that state apprentices should be treated as cases, for which the current demand on the labour market is low, but is expected to grow. The third part of the measures should enable a takeover of current vocational schools by larger companies, or associations of companies, chambers of commerce, associations of employers, other organisations representing professions, and also municipalities. This takeover should be free of charge. To prevent possible abuses of this measure, a takeover of a vocational school would be backed by a contract, which would include a probation period, a commitment to utilise the property for educational purposes for a period of time - 20 years, for example, and an obligation to return the property in case these and other possible conditions are breached. This part of the measures would help decrease the number of state apprentices, would free the state from an obligation to maintain and invest in the property taken over, and would also guarantee higher relevance of VET to the needs of employers, and an improvement in the quality of VET. The fourth part of the measures should involve either the implementation of tax incentives for companies, that financially participate in the training of apprentices, or the modification of requirements for the companies´ payments to the employment fund. In the first case, the current tax rate would be decreased for companies, that finance apprentice training, and increased for the rest of the companies. The majority of these measures represent indirect tools, and leave decision-making to the companies. A cancellation of the category of state apprentices or its elimination from private schools, announced with a sufficient advice, could be an example of the drastic directive measure. The above mentioned measures do not intend to eliminate the category of state apprentices completely, but rather decrease its share down to approx. 5–10%.

The low diversification of founders of vocational schools is considered to be the fourth major problem. It causes financial problems, and is related to the quality of VET as well. A solution to this problem was mentioned in the previous paragraph in a relation to apprentices´ training. This diversification should also apply to secondary technical and higher professional schools.

The financing of vocational schools is based on the per-capita-payments method. This method has been justified not only by past years, but also by the fact that a number of other countries decided to use it, after having been searching for the most suitable way to distribute the total funds, and the best method to calculate the total amount of these funds in a state budget. This method proved viable in particular between the state and the regional level. On the other hand, between the regional and local (school) levels other viewpoints are being considered with justification, and thus the per-capita method is somewhat weakened there. A weak point of the per-capita method is that while it is suitable for financing current educational activities, it barely considers (and probably cannot consider at all) longer-term, strategic objectives. Provided that the strategy for VET is developed, the per-capita method of financing could be further adjusted to help achieve the long-term, strategic objectives. In any case, this method should be extended from the phase of distribution of financial means to the phase of developing a budget for VET. Financial means should be provided to the schools whose graduates can find their job and remain in it for certain time.

Although VET financing is a key issue, it is on the other hand a tool to create the most favourable conditions under which the system of VET could function properly, the strategic objectives could be achieved, and the highest possible quality of VET could be reached. To be able to implement the recommended conditions for VET financing, as well as other conditions, the current legislation must be modified.

1.4 Legislation

The current Bill of Education, as well as other bills and regulations often stand in the way of the implementation of the recommended and other measures. Therefore it is necessary to draft proposals for an amendment of these bills and regulations. A general objective of these amendments should be to enable the implementation of procedures, that reflect the recommended measures. It is impossible to go further into details at this point. Neither is it necessary, since the majority of these recommendations are summarised in an analytic report of a work group, dealing with the issues of legislation. It is however sensible to at least indicate the direction of the recommended amendments.

First and foremost, it is necessary to incorporate certain terms to the educational legislation, which deal with the utilisation of progressive procedures, related so far only to experimental testing, and by having them incorporated into the bills of education, these procedures could be used routinely in a broader school environment. Thus, terminology is not the only issue concerned. Terms such as educational programme, educational standard, educational module etc. are those to be considered.

Another set of problems deals with questions related to the system of vocations in VET. An objective of these amendments should be to substitute the current set of narrowly specified vocations with a new set, which would make it possible to enforce the principle of a flexible VET, and to implement on the national level broadly defined educational clusters, leaving space on the school level to develop specific educational programmes. The new system of vocations should be based on the already drafted proposal of system of trunk vocations, while at the same time it should be comparable with international classifications of levels of education and occupations.

The third set of amendments should set the ground for the implementation of educational programmes with a gradual choice of educational pathway, and with various levels of education. Considering the different levels of education, a system of certification should be developed and implemented, that would cover both initial and continuing vocational education.

The fourth set of amendments should set grounds for the establishment of new institutions, which will be involved in management of VET and for setting up of their power. Therefore, as a part of the amendments of legislation, the National Board of VET and the Regional VET Authorities should be established, and their composition and competencies defined. Together with the issues of management, other issues should be resolved, such as those dealing with teachers´ work obligations (e. g. related to a modular arrangement of subject matter), and school headmasters´ obligations (e. g. more specific definition of their responsibilities for the school's strategy and work results). Issues dealing with an involvement of social partners in VET should also be a part of this set of amendments.

Last but not least, the fifth set of amendments of legislation should implement proposals suggested in the area of VET financing.

Even though these amendments have been discussed one after another, they should be drafted and implemented together as one set.

2. CONCLUSIONS

This synthetic paper on VET policy has attempted to indicate the direction of the future development of VET in the Czech Republic. This direction should help the Czech system of VET finalise the structural changes and start with the system reform. It attempts to improve the flexibility, quality, and decentralisation of VET. As it focuses only on certain systemic aspects, it represents only part of the work, that needs to be done. Only together with the other synthetic paper, which focuses on other aspects (curricula, teachers training, research and internationalisation, and partly on quality control), will it form a complete unit dealing with the intentions and measures that should be undertaken.

This synthetic paper makes it apparent, that the increased quality of VET is the major objective of its further development. To be able to reach this objective, the flexibility of VET must be improved, and the decentralisation of decision-making must be strengthened. From the perspective of the monitored systemic aspects, this can be achieved by introducing the following measures of a top priority:

☐ establishing and operating the National Board of VET with relevant competencies
☐ establishing and operating the Regional VET authorities with relevant competencies
☐ involving social partners on all levels of management of VET
☐ implementing a set of measures in the area of VET financing

Competencies and work content of these newly established bodies should, in cooperation with social partners, focus on elaborating the VET policy, which will be based on a closer interconnection with the labour market and employers. The focus should as well be on improving the network of schools, and the structure of students, on implementing educational standards with a possibility to develop school educational programmes, on introducing a new set of vocational clusters, on improving monitoring, evaluation, and VET quality control, and on improving the system of financing. All of the above mentioned aspects of future VET policy must be incorporated in the better legislative framework.

The recommended measures intend to further develop the system of VET, that is characteristic for the socio-economic environment of the Czech Republic, utilising experiences from foreign countries, and with respect to requirements resulting from the future closer interconnection of the Czech Republic with the EU member states.

LEGISLATION/ RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT/ INTERNATIONALISATION

Jan KOVAŘOVIC

INTRODUCTION

1. This paper represents the next stage of the evaluation of the Phare programme „VET Reform". It builds on reports of working groups dealing with three themes - Legislation, Research and Development, Internationalisation.

First of all, it summarises experience gained so far, both positive outcomes and negative constraints, evaluates them and tries to arrive at conclusions of a more general nature, related to the course of the transformation. It argues that the evaluation should be focused particularly on fundamental changes in the education system, aiming at long-term objectives. The second part summarises past developments, giving special attention to the outcomes of the Phare experiment. The third part identifies future requirements which have, however, already become pressing, and recommends to focus on three key points: on fostering international co-operation, on linking (or even fusing) all areas and sectors of vocational education by the overarching concept of lifelong learning, finally on devising a transparent mechanism for educational policy development, fit for democratic countries. These recommendations, grounded both on the progress of the transformation and on the evaluation of the Phare programme, pursue its intentions further.

1. OUTCOMES OF ANALYSES

1.1 Legislation

2. The final report of the working group begins by stating that laws, regulations and other legal instruments have responded to many needs of vocational education only partially. In some cases natural and logical development has been barred (e. g. the development of integrated secondary schools), in other cases undesired for excesses have been prevented (e. g. the use of trimesters). The stabilising role of legal instruments in somewhat hasty development of vocational education should not, however, be dominant, becoming an obstacle of a natural development. A new Education Act is long overdue, both the structure and contents of the existing law having been overtaken by new developments. Moreover, it has to be based on the new Constitution which clearly states that responsibilities can only be defined or obligations stipulated by the law. Hence, it will have to contain many conditions and stipulations which have been part of lower level legal instruments so far. The new Act should cover both the general and the vocational education, however having due regard to their differences. Higher professional schools as an independent segment of the education system should be the subject of a special law, the same applying to teachers.

The report concludes by recommending some modifications of laws and regulations, so as to limit existing problems when extending the scope of the experiment in the future. These problems are not very serious, yet quite significant for future development.

3. The first problem relates to the need to exactly define from the legal point of view new concepts, which have not been used in legal documents yet. The meaning of some concepts may have already become quite settled, others are still subject to discussions, many concepts are used daily, but without any clear-cut meaning. As for elaboration of future legal norms their meaning has to be unequivocal and based on common usage, new fundamental concepts – „level of education", „educational programme" (referring to school curriculum), „educational standard" (referring to national curriculum), „module", and also „principal branch" (or core branch) and „cluster of principal branches", needed for lower levels of legal documents – have to be defined and generally accepted as part of preparatory work for the new Act. The problem, however, is not purely of semantics. It is quite symptomatic for the course of the transformation that neither fundamental concepts nor principles and aims have been clearly defined, discussed and accepted right from the beginning of the process.

4. The second problem is quite significant as well, that is the already outmoded arrangement of the twin system of academic (or study) branches and vocational branches, which corresponded to the former rigid separation of two types of secondary schools, the technical schools and the vocational schools. Following a period of almost too rapid a development of the system of branches and of a steep increase in number of schools, it is necessary after a thorough evaluation of the situation to make the system of branches more transparent and to introduce generally acceptable basic principles, which would guarantee its long-term stability and make it more cohesive. In addition, pilot schools have introduced modules and extended opportunities for forming educational programmes and educational paths. A more stable system of branches should be based on principal branches with broader occupational profiles, allowing greater job flexibility. Legal barriers preventing the use of academic and vocational branches should be removed in all types of technical and vocational schools where conditions would allow it, or, at least, a far greater degree of horizontal mobility between the two main streams should be introduced.

If a new system of branches is enacted, the introduction of the first common year and the use of educational programmes leading to more levels of education than only one will be easier. Model educational programmes for principal branches could have the common first year if required, and contain leaving points at different levels.

5. The introduction of modules has brought other problems, too. An uneven distribution of teachers´ work-load during the course of the school-year – when in certain weeks the number of obligatory teaching hours is exceeded, while in others it is not fulfilled – can easily be addressed, using existing division into two components, to classroom teaching itself, and to preparation for it, and by changing their relation accordingly. Changes in the teacher´s role – more time required for development of teaching materials, and increased need for in-service training – will affect the uneven distribution of the second component as well. Also the requirement to certify completion of each single module can be met under existing regulations, as it is the responsibility of the Ministry.

6. Pilot schools have introduced projects of students as part of school work, which has been received well. Now they propose that a final project should be made an obligatory part of the leaving examination, contributing to the overall assessment of the student. This requirement goes beyond existing regulations, nevertheless one of urgent current problems is to modify existing leaving examinations. When addressing the problem, the idea of a final project could be considered, at least as an auxiliary criterion.

7. The most serious problem, not limited of course only to pilot schools, is the different position of the two types of technical and vocational schools from the point of view of their setting-up, their official recognition (that is, making them part of the network of schools) and, in particular, of their funding (leading to a different position of their students). The transfer of responsibility for training in vocational branches has not been completed. The consequences were the expansion of the number of the „state apprentices", and a thoroughly unsatisfactory involvement of social partners. The problem is generally felt to be most pressing, yet it is not perceived adequately in a wider perspective, particularly in connection with the sector of continuing education.

1.2 Research and Development

8. When planning the evaluation, one working group was assigned to cover two themes - Research and Development, Internationalisation - and to prepare one final report for both problem areas. (Although a substantial and very important part of research done during the period evaluated has been carried out for international programmes in particular the Phare experiment, it is discussed in this part of the text, the following part on Internationalisation will only focus on some aspects of it.) The final report made a detailed overview of the most important research work connected with the Phare VET Reform programme and with other programmes of foreign assistance, and carried out outside this framework (including an overview of main research work done in the Institute for Vocational and Technical Education, of its conclusions and use). Further, it summarised recommendations of main research studies on vocational education both of local and foreign experts. Special attention was paid to work dealing with the interface between the education system and the labour market, and to conditions of development and innovation at the school level including the need for support systems. The report aimed at assessing the extent to which the research and development carried out so far responds to the needs of vocational education, the mutual interaction of respective areas of research, and the desirable future focus of research.

9. The first problem group is dealing with co-ordination of research, with the need to focus it on key areas and urgent problems, and can be summed up as lack of policy and strategy. Most activities were undertaken rather ad hoc, depending on the needs of respective government agencies and research institutions and were related to the international programmes and projects available at the moment. Consequently, the field of vocational education and training has not been investigated as a whole and within its full

context, the knowledge and recommendations so far are either only fragmentary or too general, without a detailed elaboration. Research has thus far neglected in particular the issues which fall outside the responsibility of the Ministry of Education – continuing education, the role played by vocational education within the concept of lifelong learning, and the relationship of schools with the labour market. The emergence of new elements in the education system (new types and levels) was a response to the needs and demands of the moment, neither based on a thought through policy nor analysed in hindsight.

Recommendations require to define a strategy and priorities for the research and development and to base them on well considered strategic steps. A course of action not based on an overall strategy of development of the whole sector and not supported by a detailed knowledge of its situation and functioning is bound not to be effective.

10. The second group of problems is concerned with the relationship between decision-making and research, focusing research on strategic needs of the Ministry. Thus far an effective channel of communication has been missing, linking researchers and decision-makers, such that would mutually enrich and benefit both by their shared knowledge. Though in the past this approach could have been viable, when own initiative of researchers or foreign initiative might have lead to innovations, irrespective or even in spite of decision-makers, it is imperative to end this situation and mutual misunderstanding, again by preparing and implementing an overall policy and strategy. A first step in this direction rests in the initiatives of the newly established Research Council of the Ministry of Education, as well as in many projects organised by it, and in projects organised under the aegis of Phare programmes or in co-operation with the OECD.

11. It is imperative to support research, development and innovative behaviour at the level of individual schools. Though many schools demonstrate considerable initiative aimed at a renewal of the contents and organisation of their study programmes and at other innovations of teaching (and use international co-operation to this end), a sufficient and broad support of these activities is lacking at present. Also absent are mechanisms to foster the sharing of innovative experience among schools as well as the material support to innovations. Programmes established by the Ministry have not been linked closely with long-term policies and have not become their instrument. Neither the significance of sharing experience and of networking at the school level is fully understood. It is necessary to strengthen support programmes both by incentive financing and by establishing the infrastructure required (consultancy services, in-service training of teachers and heads, organising exchange of experience among schools, methodical guidance).

12. It is necessary to adequately address both the co-ordination of research across the whole sector of vocational education and training, and its personal, financial and institutional backing. This is a twin problem, both aspects being closely linked. A major part of research and development of vocational education and training is carried out in a specialised institute steered by the Ministry of Education, although some activities are undertaken elsewhere in the education sector or outside it. A unified strategy and organisation of research and development is lacking, projects are not sufficiently linked

together, there are some cases of duplication of some activities, only with minor modifications by various institutions and as part of different projects. Furthermore, the mutual relationship of different ways of organising research activities has not been satisfactory (that is, research has been carried out either by a specialised institute implementing a long-term programme of activity, or by individuals and teams mostly at higher education institutions having received a grant). This results in their co-ordination being far from adequate and in a certain loss of transparency of financing.

1.3 Internationalisation

13. This theme covers several aspects of the final report: the interaction between developments in the Czech Republic and in developed countries (that is, members of the European Union and the OECD), the impact of foreign expertise, the significance of the Czech participation in international projects, assessment of international co-operation at the school level.

14. During the period evaluated the Czech education system has been increasingly exposed to, even confronted with, the situation of developed countries – at the beginning by more or less passive reception, by participating in international conferences and seminars, by implementing projects prepared in co-operation by foreign experts, today by becoming more or less an equal partner, participating in joint programmes and projects organised most often by the European Union and the OECD, and actively working in international organisations.

The sole enumeration of the Czech participation in international projects demonstrates the fact that it has been the outcome of a sustained effort, of purposeful initiative and activity. Close co-operation of main stakeholders, ministries and some organisations, has been achieved, the continuity of work has been maintained, supported by continuity of key personalities. To a great degree, international projects have been linked purposefully one to another and to locally-based activities, supplementing them with missing dimensions and aspects. To a degree, too, they have played a role in developing long-term policies and strategies. It is probably exceptional, how much foreign assistance has been used for systematic implementation of a consistent policy.

15. International co-operation exists at the school level as well, in particular as part of the Phare experiment. Pilot schools profile their co-operation with partners abroad so as to compensate missing experience, for instance in establishing school-based enterprises, creating a consulting and advisory centre, establishing a regional centre, co-operating with the school council and local employers, linking the societal demand to the supply of educational programmes, using modular programmes, fostering adult education, implementing the concept of lifelong learning, introducing different kinds of examinations and output standards, adopting new structures of steering, democratic decision-making and delegating responsibility.

Apart from international programmes, there are many examples of bilaterally-based co-operation, and finally a vast number of direct contacts, even twinnings, between partner schools, yielding concrete outcomes for the school, community and region. Because of legal entity granted to schools, these contacts do not have to be approved, often they are not even registered. Costs are covered by the schools themselves, sometimes with the support of local employers.

1.4 Conclusions

16. If we try to arrive from experience gained so far at more general conclusions, we can find that a certain common denominator exists, that certain relationships can be demonstrated, and that certain measures have to be resorted to.

Basic relationships concerning legislation include the relation between the norm and the acceptable individual deviation, the relation between hierarchical levels of legal instruments (e. g. between the law and the regulation) and the way they are codified, and the fundamental issue, the relation between conflicting requirements to have a stable legal framework and to adapt it to change. As the basis of the system, defining conditions for its functioning, legislation has to be founded on a clear notion of first principles and aims, as for instance are the roles of the state, individuals and schools and a desired measure of their autonomy. (It is symptomatic for the course of the transformation, however, that neither fundamental changes of the system have been followed by a new Education Act, mere amendments having been deemed sufficient, nor that a broader and more comprehensive framework for future changes, covering all forms of education and training, is considered.)

To respect these relationships adequately two requirements have to be met: the legal framework prepared well in advance which has to be founded on a consistent long-term educational policy, and a transparent mechanism put in place which would enable to make ongoing and gradual changes with the participation of main stakeholders.

Two relationships are essential if research and development is to be really effective and to play corresponding role in the development of the education system: towards decision-makers who usually commission it and should utilise it fully, and to schools which should be aware of results achieved, using them for their transformation. As it is necessary to respect different time horizons on which both partners operate, research and development has to be founded on a long-term consistent policy which would allow it to be carried out well in advance before political and operational decision have to be taken, and which would make possible adequate linking of research tasks. Respective partners have to build their mutual co-operation systematically, grounding it on shared long-term aims. Only thus research will really reflect changes in the system, anticipate and prepare them, only thus changes will be consistent and deliberately planned for.

Internationalisation of vocational education poses two problems in particular: what is the scope, or limit, of international co-operation, that is to what extent it is necessary, fitting or even possible to use foreign experience, and what is the relationship between the development at home and abroad.

Education systems are so very much rooted in the past, reflecting cultural traditions, economic performance and socio-political conditions, that direct transfers or copying are never possible. As, however, the economy has already become globalised, and the evolution of the economy and society has very similar aims and converging courses in most developed countries, their education systems have to respond to similar pressures and address almost identical problems, even if with different focus and stress. It seems that a certain „area of best practice" is evolving, and that all countries are trying to reach it, though sometimes from different directions, according to their conditions and traditions. The human factor, the labour force mobility and the „education system mobility", i. e. mobility of students, teachers and qualifications achieved, will contribute to it. Foreign experience is often a stimulus, and always a benchmark for comparing and evaluating own activities. Again, a long-term policy and strategy are a prerequisite, in order to have a framework to refer to, and to gain sufficient time for learning from foreign experience. And all main stakeholders at all levels have to be exposed to it.

17. This evaluation is being undertaken at a certain moment of development· since 1989 a lot of work has been done, the education system – including the sub-system of vocational system and training – has been already transformed to a great degree, nevertheless the transformation is far from being complete. Outcomes of the first stage of the evaluation, final reports of working groups, clearly show resulting problems and define aims to be achieved. We are in a midway situation, which can be expressed in a both concrete and symbolical way, if we accept that the climax of our „return to Europe" will be the accession to the Union.

In the middle of the road, doubts often appear, concerning both aims and methods of achieving them, and it is necessary to re-think how to continue, that is to answer why, from where, and where to are we going. This is most important in our situation – not always were we fully aware of the development, responding often to immediate problems, and knowledge of developments abroad was not always adequate.

Hence the main focus on the two dimensions, closely linked together, even interdependent, which we think to be decisive:

- ☐ on the progress towards long-term aims, that is on defining aims for different time horizons, as the overall solution has to meet requirements both of today and of the future
- ☐ on the fundamental change of the approach (often called the paradigm shift) at the level of the overall system and of balancing its main elements, and on setting-up the mechanism allowing the change

18. That means, firstly, that the evaluation should not be focused only at past developments and present problems, that is on overcoming the heritage of the old regime and on the transformation process, but should be taking into account at the same time the

even more important long-term horizon, which is related to the accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union, with all its obligations and problems. The achievements of the post-November period should not be judged only on the results already achieved, but more on their direction, whether they would be hitting future targets as well.

19. Secondly, the evaluation should be focused not only on respective elements and structures of the system and their relationships, but on the overall transformation of the system, on the size and depth of system-wide changes, concerning

- the relationship of formal and non-formal education, that is the position of new forms and kinds of education which have not been legally acknowledged yet
- the relationship of initial and continuing education which should together form a diversified yet coherent system
- the place of vocational education in the education system from the point of view of the age of students and the level of education (this includes the specific problem of vocational education at the tertiary level, as vocational education is constantly being extended and pushed upwards)
- the relationship between general and vocational education (stable as it is today, but possibly subject to even radical changes as a consequence of strengthening and developing the enterprise-based training), today having marked differences between them, in particular in financing
- new forms of vocational education, outside the traditional education system, and their relationship to traditional forms

20. The following text will discuss the past course of the transformation, to what extent has the system been already changed, what is the position of the Phare experiment, and what insights have been gained for developing a new mechanism. After confrontation with future requirements recommendations what to focus on will be formulated.

2. PAST DEVELOPMENTS

2.1 First stage of transformation

21. It is necessary to understand rightly the true nature of changes which the Czech education system has undergone since 1989. To a large degree, they were a natural reaction to deficiencies, distortions and restrictions of the previous regime. True, they were initiated, supported and even driven by four interlinked systemic measures which aimed intentionally at changing the closed and uniform system into an open and plural one. Yet basically it has been mostly the bottom-up development, and certainly not an implementation of a carefully conceived and planned, publicly discussed, generally accepted, consistent reform.

All this is quite understandable, given the situation after 1989. On one side disgust with ideology, refusal of prescriptions and planning, suspicion and even denial of the role of the State, on the other side the return to the individual, no more manipulated but free and active, reliance on private initiative and, above all, faith in the market, with memories of the pre-war education system looming in the background. The thrust of the transformation was firstly directed at relaxing old ties and removing barriers. Only limited effort has been made systematically to catch up with the development democratic countries have undergone during those past fifty years.

22. The release of individual initiative and activity of schools has been a joint impact of four systemic measures, initiated by the Ministry and introduced by new educational bills:

☐ recognition of the right of pupils (or their parents) to choose their educational path
☐ breaking down of the State monopoly in education by allowing to establish private and denominational schools, put more or less on the same footing as public schools
☐ extensive devolution of power in the governance of the education system both by establishing district educational authorities as „field offices" of the Ministry, and by delegating a number of decision-making powers down to schools
☐ introduction of a formula funding (per capita funding) applying to State and non-State schools alike

This approach has had many positive results. It has led to the overall liberalisation of the education system and allowed the educational supply to respond to changes on the demand side. The expansion in the quantity, structure and diversity of education has followed, in particular concerning technical and vocational education on the secondary level. Some of the newly emancipated and more autonomous schools have become the very centres of activity and agents of change and development.

At the same time, this development has brought some excesses as well, above all rising costs, atomisation and a certain loss of transparency, rationality and cohesion, which might - if not addressed in time - lead to a degree of disintegration of the system. Some of these shortcomings have already been brought to the awareness of the Ministry and are being addressed, but the ultimate remedy can only be found in the completion and careful balancing of the new decentralised mechanism.

23. The heart of the problem is that although the old centralised mechanism, established originally for the 19th century industrial society and adapted to the needs of the command economy, focusing primarily on needs of enterprises and little on needs of students, has been partially dismantled and transformed, a new consistent mechanism conceived for the civic society and the market economy has not been fully developed and completed. Such a mechanism would have to take into account also trends in education which have emerged in developed democratic countries during the past fifty years, and which have been directed not only at decentralisation and autonomy of schools (the vertical dimension), but also at the relation of schools to the community and to social partners (the horizontal dimension), at the key role of human resources in the coming information society and the globalised economy, at making equity a priority aim, and hence at vastly increasing the size and diversity of the secondary, tertiary and continuing education sectors.

In particular, substantial parts of the new mechanism - probably decisive for the success of the future development - have not been put into place yet:

- ☐ a clear definition of responsibilities and roles of respective levels of governance (especially between the centre and the schools), including the participation of social partners, and of setting-up all mechanisms essential for the decentralised and participatory steering
- ☐ the introduction of democratic procedures - definition of aims, formulation of strategy, public discussion, reaching a consensus
- ☐ an effective mechanism of evaluation focused on educational outcomes - in lieu of detailed prescription of inputs and processes - which would serve for creating new adequate checks and balances
- ☐ although emergency measures in financing - that is the intervention of the State, which led to the emergence of „state apprentices"- made it possible for the VET system to survive in new conditions, when the economic system changed profoundly, a new rational and comprehensive system of financing which would involve all the three partners - the State, enterprises, individual students - has not been established so far
- ☐ matching of qualifications as produced by the education system and as required by the labour market, their standardisation across sectors, and building of a new link towards the labour market which would replace the old planning mechanism

2.2 Experience gained

24. The past development has brought some important insights into the nature of the transformation process which can guide it in the future. They relate to its different aspects.
Some insights warn us against being over-dogmatic. Unfortunately, any principle or policy measure, however sound, has its limits of the safe usage. Beyond them, taken to the extremes, the effect can become just the reverse. Hence, it is not only the principle/policy measure itself, but its degree and proportion as well that count. There is a limit to reducing the role of the State, certain tasks cannot be delegated elsewhere.

The right proportion is best achieved by careful balancing and weighting of different - supplementary and even opposite - measures, not by applying one-sided measures only. For instance, recent experience has clearly shown that the „bottom-up" approach cannot be relied upon exclusively, but that the „top-down" component has to be retained, and that it is necessary to systematically support horizontal contacts - networking - of schools as well.

Other insights make us understand that a greater autonomy of subjects brings out a far greater diversity - uncertainty or even little predictability - of behaviour and uneven levels of performance. When preparing new measures and mechanisms, this has to be taken into account in several ways:

Firstly, when opening opportunities for initiative, positive measures – incentives, inducements – have to be supplemented by some restrictions protecting against incompetence, misuse or even abuse.

Secondly, to accommodate diverse levels of maturity and preparedness of autonomous subjects, all rules and procedures should be designed and implemented so as to say on two levels at the same time: in a limited area granting a great deal of autonomy and only requiring little control, allowing to use the creative potential of those who meet certain conditions, and generally – across the board – more cautiously, with in-built restrictions and guarantees, acting as a safety net.

Thirdly, it has to be accepted that it is natural to proceed with different speed – to allow for change and development in certain areas (pockets, „centres of positive deviation") only, while the rest may wait until the right time comes. Moreover, one important function of the state would be to support systematically such „centres of excellence" which would serve as a model for others, raising public interest and awareness at the same time. (There remains a lot to be done for pilot schools in this respect.)

And finally, they have taught us that this transformation will be a gradual and lengthy process, that it is imperative to retain a considerable degree of control over it at every stage, and that increased responsibility (of schools, heads, teachers) which the change brings must be alleviated by supporting mechanisms.

2.3 Significance of the Phare experiment

25. The Pilot Schools experiment has not been the only major reform activity. As a matter of fact, the Ministry have stressed right from the beginning that they see it only as one of possible approaches, that the transformation process should unfold in more directions. (This attitude has to be accepted, as one of main objectives of the transformation is to build up a pluralist and diversified education system.)

The experiment had several clearly defined aims which have been achieved. Firstly, to offer a method how to maintain a certain degree of autonomy within a set framework (applied to the design of the school curriculum), not a single binding solution. Secondly, to adapt the school to the need of end users (students) and to extend their options when choosing educational path. Thirdly, to use modules as a unifying element, linking schools and potentially initial and continuing education together. Other innovations (in the Czech context) were the focus on key skills and broad occupational profiles, the postponement of the choice of educational path by one year, and the opportunity to be certified even when leaving the school prematurely.

26. Yet the reasons why the Pilot Schools experiment has a quite unique position and is most relevant for the whole education system are much deaper. It is because of its width, depth and duration, because of the fact that for the first (and more or less the only) time

the transformation process has been conceived, planned and implemented as a complete whole, containing all stages and aspects, which have been in our conditions so far neglected or ignored, because of the fact that sufficient time and resources were made available, and necessary mechanisms and organisational measures have been carried through.

In particular, specific contributions of the programme should be stressed, both at the Strategic Study and the Pilot Schools stages:

- ☐ a clear definition of aims right from the beginning in the terms of reference
- ☐ the establishment of the Advisory Task Force as a consultative and consensus building body, linking major stakeholders to the process
- ☐ a clear management structure – a clear definition of responsibilities between the PMU, ATF, Steering Committee and the Headmasters´ Committee, transparent and open handling of problems
- ☐ specific effort to attract wider audience, to create a certain forum which would facilitate the reception and dissemination of the experiment
- ☐ due stress laid on supporting mechanisms, as training of teachers, study visits, transfer of know-how, and on the procurement of equipment
- ☐ a key position of the evaluation, conceived again as a transparent process and a learning experience, focused not only on the outcomes of the experiment, but on the position and relevance of the experiment as a part of the whole transformation process

The significance of the experiment for the future development then is in the fact that a model process has been transplanted, tested and shown to be successful and viable in the Czech environment, and that not so minute groups of headmasters/ teachers and the evaluators have undergone an exemplary experiential learning. In fact, certain mechanisms and bodies established for the experiment can easily be transformed to serve the whole VET sector. Compared to other sectors and segments of the education system, the secondary VET has rather advanced, experience gained so far can be used across the whole system as a nucleus of the future development.

27. This is important, as the scope of the Pilot Schools experiment has been limited to upper secondary technical and vocational schools, and the future development of VET will have to address other sectors, namely tertiary education and continuing education. In addition, it will be necessary to take into account the new, shifting relationship of general and vocational education.

The traditional relationship between general and vocational education is undergoing a fundamental change today: blurring the border between the two, and pushing vocational education upwards, to higher forms and levels of the system. Both is caused by requirements of the development of the economy and society, and by a changing role of the school, focused more on providing generalised competencies rather than narrow qualifications.

At the same time, as a parallel trend, there is a growing need for acquiring professional competence on a tertiary level, leading to a phenomenon of mass tertiary education. This has a direct consequence not only for traditional higher education (understood so far solely as education offered by universities), but also for re-thinking of the role and place of secondary education and its vocational component. (It is quite significant in this respect that some pilot school partners have been found among institutions of tertiary education.)

3. FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 Future requirements

28. Although according to the para 126 of the Maastricht Treaty education remains the responsibility of the member states, accession to the European Union would profoundly affect further development of vocational education and training. Direct legal consequences would be relatively limited, yet new increased requirements on the economy and society will increase requirements on the education system. In the area of legal approximation proper, directives concerning the recognition of diplomas of tertiary education and the relationship with the labour market and social partners would have to be complied with, and the principle of equity, of guaranteeing equal opportunities, would have to be consistently applied. Completing missing democratic procedures, mechanisms and institutions would be essential as well. In the curricular area the importance of language teaching at all levels and types of schools would be enhanced, and the European dimension, that is the aspect of common existence of national cultures, would be widely introduced.

The main impact, however, would be indirect. The latest documents of the European Union (White Book, 1996) and the OECD (Lifelong Learning for All, 1996) emphasise the role of education systems in increasing economic performance and maintaining social cohesion. The response to global competition, to long-term unemployment and marginalisation of groups at risk, and to new requirements of the information society has been found in a new concept of lifelong learning. Its gradual implementation would lead to the deepest transformation of the education system yet.

29. The concept of lifelong learning has been formulated on economic, political and ethical grounds. Further development of the present post-industrial society will depend above all on the human factor, on high skills and on high level of general education, on the ability to adapt to the rapid pace of change and yet to maintain the cohesion of the society. In spite of constant technological progress, increase in productivity and standard of living enjoyed by most people serious problems remain – high unemployment, marginalisation and even pauperisation of some groups which are at risk. Who has missed the opportunity to obtain adequate education, risks exclusion from the society, unequality is only deepening.

Under conditions of the globalised economy and increased competition it is necessary to utilise the potential of every member of the society to the utmost, enabling him/her to develop fully and to achieve full participation in the activities of the society. The long-term aim is the learning society, whose every member has the necessary foundation for knowledge and skill acquisition, is adequately motivated and supported by opportunities created for everyone, not only for the privileged.

The implementation of the concept of lifelong learning does not mean only to add to the existing education system the sector of continuing education (adult education) as an alternative route to education and qualification. It is a profound change of the conception of education, when all learning opportunities - be they in traditional schools within the education system or outside them - are seen as one complex, allowing diverse and repeated transitions between education and work, making possible to obtain the same qualifications and competences by various routes and at any stage of life. The formal education system as we know it today creates the necessary foundation for lifelong learning, yet it is only part of it. All mechanisms - steering, division of responsibilities, financing, evaluation and standards, teachers´ training and support systems - have to be conceived from the point-of-view of this new complex.

Compared with the previous concept of lifelong education the focus has shifted as a result of changes of the economic and societal context. Learning outside the education system, on-the-job training, recognition of prior work experience, and in particular merging of learning and work are emphasised. The role of social partners, especially of enterprises, has increased. And finally, both the personal choice of every individual and the role of the market are stressed, the individual and the societal demand are linked together.

This new concept, presented in January 1996 at the conference of the education ministers of the OECD member states (attended for the first time by the Czech minister as well) is the logical apex of development so far, building on all previous work carried out not only in education and training but also in social politics, in particular on fighting the unemployment. The basic relevant OECD document (Job Study, 1994) sees the improvement of „labour force skills and competences through wide-ranging changes in education and training systems" as one of main measures, to be achieved „by improving the quality of initial education, by improving the school-to-work-transition, and by improving the incentives for enterprises and workers to invest in continued learning". These three areas have remained as priorities when implementing lifelong learning.

30. The concept of lifelong learning has been formulated as a response to requirements of the present stage of the development of the post-industrial society. The information society (knowledge-based society/economy, learning society) is based on the use of information and on the high level of skills, competencies and knowledge of workers which have become the key factor that determines comparative advantage in advanced modern economies. Main features are the adaptability and flexibility, the focus on innovation and initiative, on quality, on teamwork and networking, at the level both of enterprises and of every worker. The constant change - of production, technology and markets - will result in significant changes of the character of work, enterprise organisation, the kind of workers demanded, and the training required.

Traditional stable hierarchical work structures with clearly defined tasks and roles are waning, as well as expectations of a stable job for the whole lifetime. Enterprises organise lean production with minimum number of core employees, supplement them with temporary workers with short contracts, contract out increasingly more work, establish ad hoc teams, decentralise management and delegate responsibility, limit the number of management levels by introducing flat structures. The proportion of temporary work and part-time work is growing, opportunities for self-employment increase instead of salaried work.

Requirements on work-force have changed accordingly. Workers have to be efficient and initiative even in an unstable, uncertain and turbulent environment. The focus is on flexibility (defined as the ability to move from one job to another, to learn new jobs in the same firm, to do several different types of tasks in the same day, to adjust quickly to different kinds of employment cultures and to different group situations, to be self-reliant), on the ability of teamwork (which includes the ability to take responsibility, to have interpersonal competences, to innovate and upgrade one´s own work as well as to teach and motivate others) and on problem-solving (which used to be systematically developed only at the highest levels of the education system).

Education and training have to change as well. Not only forms and methods (stressing key skills, group work, project work, active methods), but the very purpose of initial education (to provide both tools and motivation for lifelong learning, particularly to raise interest) and the role of the school, which should become an environment supporting creativity, initiative and activity (and at the same time limiting or excluding risks which curtail it), creating conditions for teamwork and development of social contacts, and having close relationship with enterprises and enterprise-based training.

3.2 Recommendations for future development

31. Building on final reports and the previous text, and in accordance with the Phare experiment where first steps have been already made, the following recommendations can be formulated in order to address problems, already existing yet not given adequate attention, which would, however, with the approaching accession to the European Union, become the more urgent and significant:

- fostering international co-operation and utilisation of foreign experience
- setting-up of a unitary framework for implementation of lifelong learning (linking of initial and continuing education)
- establishing an open and participative mechanism for educational policy development and implementation

Fostering international co-operation:

32. The capacity for international co-operation and for critical utilisation of foreign experience have to be systematically supported and developed at all three levels, though for different reasons and with different aims.

At the level of the centre, it is a part of one of its essential functions – of the environmental scan, of systematically monitoring, analysing and evaluating the development abroad. The aim is not only to get factual information, but – what is even more important – to establish an adequate frame of reference, so that our strategy and policy aims will be focused on long-term and global objectives, instead of the current practice which is often just the reverse. Although in past years the Ministry has made some important steps in this direction (e. g. the establishment of the Educational Policy Centre, the bulletin Education in Europe), this essential function of the centre should be strengthened, formalised and perhaps institutionalised (e. g. regularly publishing and disseminating reports).

At the regional level, international co-operation will introduce comparatively quickly this „missing link" which has become so important in the European Union, and which is decisive for finding concrete ways adapted to local conditions for achieving general aims, in particular in relation to the labour market.

And finally at the school level, direct personal experience of as many teachers and headmasters as possible is absolutely essential for the unimpaired progress of the transformation. However, some conditions have to be created – working knowledge of at least one language, and some foundation studies. That should be one of pillars of the in-service training, and plans for personal development of teachers should be built around it.

Lifelong learning:

33. In response to pressures of global competition and disintegrating tendencies of today´s societies the members of the European Union have developed a new concept of Lifelong Learning. The whole post-war development of education systems of the developed world culminates in this concept, which is in fact, another educational revolution after the introduction of compulsory schooling. It requires not only extensive development of continuing education (both within the formal education system and outside it, having various forms), but also – and to a great degree above all – a new approach to the traditional school system, that is to the system of initial education. Everything – concepts, aims, principles, mechanisms, rules – have to be re defined and re-conceived to fit the new paradigm.

34. In a way, the Czech delay in many important directions and areas may eventually help in finding the comprehensive solution: it will become imperative to address the lot – VET, continuing education, tertiary education, lifelong learning – as one package.

The resulting comprehensive integrated system should link together all sectors of the education system (initial and continuing education), major stakeholders (the State, enterprises, individual students), all types of provision (school-based and enterprise-based) and all providers (state, public, private). Such a system would allow of the utmost flexibility and diversity at the level of programmes and institutions, whereas the necessary degree of cohesion and integration would be guaranteed by a mechanism of financing, producing adequate incentives for the participation of major stakeholders, by a correlating infrastructure of levels of qualification and occupational standards, by assessment and

certification of students, and finally by evaluation, accreditation and licensing of providers. This infrastructure should be a joint responsibility of the state and social partners, with a corresponding mechanism of negotiating and consensus building.
The whole package of measures to be implemented would include formulation of long-term aims and principles, formulation of the necessary legal and financial framework, articulation of missing elements of the mechanism and putting them in place, providing guidance and initiating development, when necessary.

35. The first steps would have to propose a framework of a decentralised system of steering and two major integrating tools - mechanisms of financing and of certification/qualification.

In contrast of today´s midway situation, the framework of decentralised steering should set forth a new definition of the role of the centre (leadership, political role, budget and legislation, quality assurance - standards and evaluation), responsibilities of respective levels (central, regional, local) and tiers (state administration, local government/community, social partners), and the need for horizontal/lateral co-operation and networking; further, define the desirable development of five essential mechanisms for indirect steering (financing, curricular reform, evaluation, information environment, support structures) and the desirable shape and format of the new Education Act.

The mechanism of financing is holding the VET system together, irrespective of type of provision and provider, of the format and locus of training, of student´s age and of objectives the student and/or the employer have, of the sector of the education system or of being outside it. Ideally, it should be based on cost/benefit analysis, however it is impossible today to establish fair rates of return.

The system of qualifications and certifications is holding the VET system together as well, irrespective of type of provision and provider, of the format and locus of training, of student´s age and of objectives the student and/or the employer have, of the sector of the education system or of being outside it. Eventually, a sort of a NVQ/SVQ system (based on levels of attainment) will have to be introduced, its modular structure guaranteeing that no cul-de-sacs will occur, and that legitimate needs both of employers and students will be met, while most, but not all modules will be competence based, and a unitary system of certification (based on credits for modules and certificates for levels) will have to be guaranteed both by the State and industry.

Elaboration of educational policy:

36. The setting-up of an open and participative mechanism for forming and implementing a consistent yet flexible educational policy is one of top priorities for further development. One of main weaknesses of the present situation - and this is true even in other areas of the society - is the absence of democratic procedures of preparing a long-term policy and strategy, and of reaching a consensus with the participation of all stakeholders - not only of central authorities, but of educationalists at all levels, local representatives, social partners and parents as well.

Such a situation certainly can be understood. It may be the last negative consequence of the past political development with a quite different political culture, when all important decisions were made by a limited number of people behind closed doors, only handed over to be implemented. It has not been and it will not be easy to overcome this situation, to be able to accept all consequences of a democratic practice, based on the choice of a free citizen but granting this prerogative to everyone, respecting all individuals but requiring them to respect others in the same way, trying to achieve participation and co-operation of all stakeholders but then taking into account and balancing their legitimate interests. (This is why all the documents we are trying to adopt stress values, attitudes, behaviour and integrity of every individual. These qualities are a tacit, none the less an indispensable prerequisite, and their frequent absence is another reason why a mere copying cannot do.)

37. Such an open and participative mechanism has two objectives, seemingly contradictory but in fact complementary: to create a stable basis for a consistent educational policy implementing long-term aims (which, by definition, must be broad enough, not tied to short-term political or personal constellations), and, at the same time, to enable a flexible response to constant change, innovation and development. The need for a flexible mechanism is based also on concepts of plurality of needs and aims, on their constant and careful balancing both on the political and professional levels, and on the participation of diverse stakeholders and the need to accommodate their initiative and to respond to local conditions.

Finally, a considerable degree of flexibility is necessary, as any policy has not only predictable positive results, but unpredictable negative results as well. The control over the transformation process must be maintained at any stage of it, allowing to suspend it if need be, and after some time, a thorough rethinking of the policy. As the impetus for change will come from all sides – from the centre, the Ministry, from the grass-root level, the schools, and laterally, from social partners – the capacity for change has to be established on all levels, the central, regional and local, each level given clearly defined responsibility and space for independent manoeuvre.

38. This mechanism will serve then both for introducing the continuous change instead of one-off reforms, and, at the same time, for assuring the genuine participation of all partners, respecting and balancing their legitimate concerns, consensus building, achieving the transparency and accountability of the whole process. It will form a basis for developing a shared view, strategy and policies, and, if required, for elaborating the principles of new laws. The legislative process will be, in fact, extended by an adequate preparatory period, the necessity of which has not always been fully acknowledged.

It is necessary to respect two requirements. Firstly, to distinguish between principles/aims to be achieved and concrete ways/measures of achieving them. Once a principle/aim is defined (and becomes binding as a result of a political commitment), it usually can be implemented in various ways, the choice being a matter of convenience and of an acceptable degree of consensus. And secondly, it is necessary to distinguish between a professional/expert opinion and a political decision, as they have a different time horizon and timing. The former has to be formulated well in advance before the latter, to allow detailed discussion before final political commitment.

39. These requirements are met by a formalised procedure which has been established in democratic countries and which is used with various modifications for elaboration of basic political and legal documents. It has two stages – preparing an expert document which would open and structure public discussion usually at the national level, preceding the political decision, that is the Green Paper, and preparing the political decision proper, that is the White Paper.

The Green Paper should propose the aims and open the process how to find ways of achieving them by proposing long-term strategy, its principles and aims, and identifying feasible ways of achieving them, by defining present day problems and feasible ways of addressing them, by showing the degree of consensus already achieved, by identifying main areas of disagreement and conditions for addressing them, and by formulating precisely the questions to be answered in the consultation process.

Publishing the Green Paper usually opens the consultation process, a period of public discussion and accompanying actions, when statements of major partners, responding to official invitation, are submitted, and comments of other participants received. This process is usually concluded by an official event, a sort of a national convention, that is a multi-sided structured discussion under participation of all major partners, and by accepting official conclusions. A political decision follows, the elaboration of an official document, set forth as the White Paper by the Government, and gradual implementation of the programme including legislation.

(Let the preparation of the Education Act of Ireland be mentioned as an example of the process involved. It was commenced by an official statement by the Minister of Education in 1989, followed by the publication of the OECD Review in 1991 and the Green Paper prepared by the Ministry of Education in April 1992, by submission of about two thousands statements by organisations and comments by individuals. It was concluded by a National Convention in October 1993 where forty-two officially invited major organisations presented their submissions, by publishing documents and conclusions of the Convention in 1994 and the White Paper in April 1995, and finally by passing the Bill in January 1997. It was a very demanding process, but political stability and personal continuity have been maintained – during that period the government has changed twice and three ministers of education have been in office.)

40. The evaluation of the Phare programme is an example of a process of a similar kind, though more modest and covering the expert level only. Yet a foundation has been set up, and after the final conference a sort of a Green Paper on Vocational Education can be prepared in order to help the Ministry to make political decisions concerning the further course of the transformation.

It can also inspire and initiate the preparation of a comprehensive Green Paper on

Education, opening a consultative process as such, which would help to involve all partners, silent so far, to attract the interest of the general public, politicians and media in problems deciding our future, to be concluded by elaborating a White Paper as a binding document on a long-term policy and strategy and by drawing-up the new Education Act.

The starting points are the same – the need to prepare ourselves for the accession to the European Union, and the necessity to implement lifelong learning.

ANALYTICAL
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6

CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION

Pavel PETROVIČ

František KAMLACH
Olga KOFROŇOVÁ
Josef PETRÁŠEK
Eliška WALTEROVÁ

INTRODUCTION

The basic purpose of the educational process is to provide to everyone education, which can develop his abilities and cultivate his character and attitudes. It should also give him enough knowledge and skills to create a personality, in which freedom and responsibility are intertwined.

The original, very simplified purpose of education lay basically in acquiring a sum of knowledge, which together form a certain part of the general cultural value of the society. This way of defining educational function and an absence of a global approach has caused a phenomenon called encyclopedism – the education content is drafted as a minimisation of a certain science field. Its consequences are an over-dimension and irrelevant to the educational content. Together with the global liberalisation of the educational system, school diversification (the establishment of private and parochial schools), an increase in the pedagogic autonomy of schools and teachers a new question appears. How to ensure the determined education quality, compatibility of educational tracks and comparability of attained results.

The current state in vocational education and training can be expressed as transitional, reflecting the sequential change of an authoritative normative model into a liberal participative one. This process is strongly influenced by the transformation of the economy, mainly privatisation, the rise of the labour market and the complete restructuring of the national economy.

1. CURRICULUM OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND ITS INTERNATIONAL CONTENT

The term curriculum has not been used often until now. As a general presumption, it should contain the complete experience acquired by pupils during the educational process. Curriculum is a way of cultivating the pupil's personality and training on his life as well as fulfilling work roles in his future occupation. Curriculum represents an extract from the culture and social experience of the society that establishes and manages the school as a educational institute.

The real image of the curriculum is importantly determined by the aspirations, features, knowledge and skills of the participating subjects of the educational process, primarily pupils and teachers. It is influenced by the character and quality of the environment, prevailing climate, relations among participating subjects and with the surroundings. It is supported by textbooks and other materials and media. It is directed and regulated by a system of curricular projects, directives and rules that define the aims, content, way of school-life management (teaching) and assessment. These projects can arise on the state, regional, local, school or class levels as well as on the level of the individual pupil. The control of the curriculum is carried out by a system of evaluation, exams and controlling school bodies.

A general framework of curriculum can be defined by the questions WHY, WHOM, WHAT, WHEN, HOW and in what CIRCUMSTANCES to educate, and expecting what EFFECTS. Answers to these question are related to the processes of planning, realisation and evaluation of education and require practical solutions on the state, school, class and pupil level.

1.1. Curriculum development basis

The basic feature of the new curriculum understanding is its programme, project character, principally different from the normative character of past pedagogic papers. The curriculum concentrates on the complexity of pedagogical phenomena and processes, consisting of teacher's and pupil's activities, input and output stages of education and a set of circumstances of the educational process. It aims from the whole, a complex of pedagogical stimuli towards its parts. This stress on the whole of the school life and a pupil should express the essential quality of the result of the educational process in a his or her knowledge and personality profile. The aims of education are leading pedagogical ideas that have a perspective and dynamic character and aim towards a personal identity of a pupil based on general, cultural, social and moral values, towards a rise of his social maturity and competency and also acquiring a subject knowledge base (the core of the subject matter). The scale of educational orientation should be projected into several sequential and connected planes, beginning with basic, educational ideas through their projection into specific educational values of certain areas up to essential the educational aims of subject and thematic entireties. Orientation to the integrity of a subject matter, interdisciplinary themes and their relations, integration and globalisation by wide life relations to reality can become an important medium of realisation of this new didactic conception of the educational process.

When thinking of defining the new approaches to educational forms and programmes, we can use some trends that are generally accepted in most of the world's educational systems. The most significant of which are following:

q Vocational education and training is not a single act but it is a permanent process, where the educational system, its structure and content are permanently confronted with economic and regional demands, pupils' interests and presumptions as well as school possibilities.

q The system's and the flexibility of its parts is supported by the fact that in the centre, there a functional methodical-didactic and containing framework are created. Grant target structures defined by appropriate standards are constant. This disables the understanding of any educational form as a single and isolated system.

q Secondary vocational education must correspond more and more with the differentiated structure of the labour market. Strictly isolated types of vocational schools as well as small differentiation of possible educational levels do not comply with it nowadays.

q The structure of the labour market is changing faster and faster and it is necessary that vocational education be able to react to it flexibly. Because of this, it is necessary to draft branches of studies grouped into variant educational tracks. It also increases the permeability of vocational education.

q A professional development of secondary schools leavers has recently meant changing occupations. Output demands in vocational education and training must, except for profession skills and knowledge, stress the approaches of high mobility, flexibility, adaptability in a wide spectrum of professions.

q Development of qualified work is differentiating in different regions and therefore even numbers and structures of graduates must be differentiated sufficiently. This can be attained only by delegating more decision rights about the structure, content, aims and branch aims and number of pupils to the schools themselves.

q Close co-operation with institutions, which are able to predict the demands of the labour market better than schools themselves, is of increasing importance and a characteristic feature of secondary vocational education. These are called social partners, mainly members of concerns, corporations, trade unions, chambers of commerce, and diverse business groupings.

The most important presumption necessary for modelling the curriculum structures of education types corresponding to basic education is respecting the above approaches. It requires the understanding and agreement with any recommended forms of vocational education as a part of a unique, deeply differentiated educational system. Main target structures of particular educational levels are the determining factor for inner differentiation of the system. Levels of the educational system should be inter-connected. Educational aims and the demanded quality of knowledge on input and output determine, how long their particular forms should be.

General educational tracks as a projected sequence of connected and relatively composed stages of education can gain diverse purposes, images and lengths. But it is necessary to draft them to provide positive development of knowledge presumptions of a pupil and vertical connection with the increasing quality of education. This system definitely should not produce one way paths, ending with a non-permeable barrier. It means that curriculum development is not just a timetable, syllabuses, methodical procedure and textbook construction but rather is a very complicated and dynamic social process, requiring human interaction, professionalism and good environmental knowledge.

1.2. International context of vocational education curriculum

Foreign experience, mainly OECD and EU members confirm that changes of curriculum are the essential part of a vocational education reform, a way of realisation of strategic changes and opportunity to realise new approaches. Providing economic competition, mobility and flexibility of manpower demands international quality comparability of profession training and certificate validity in all states, which are entering the international context and want to be successful. It is also one of demands on the Czech Republic to be allowed into international integration processes and European structures. This trend does not mean according to EU papers an attempt at the uniformity of vocational education curricula but recognising and supporting its heterogeneity, which should be preserved. It lies in finding a balance between the integration and heterogeneity in context to general international trends of vocational education curriculum development and providing a transparency of acquired qualifications.

A comparison with the situation abroad shows that implementation of curricular changes in vocational education in the CR is more difficult owing to several reasons. Transition from central curricular programmes to programmes developed in school have caused the following:

1. a huge diversity and low lucidity of branches
2. supporting competitiveness among schools in gaining pupils but less (if at all) practical economic policy and policy of human resources development

The following are stressed abroad as important conditions for the implementation of the curricular reform:

q communication among schools
q co-operation with social partners on all levels (central, regional, local)
q standardisation of demands on curricular outputs and qualifications
q co-ordination and competent monitoring of curricular changes connected with development of supporting structures and mechanisms
q producing relevant system of evaluation and evaluation tools

Starting activities of conception and realisation of curriculum development and assessment in Phare pilot schools experiment are expert studies, which construct recommendations based on experiences from developed democratic countries, mainly European and set the problems into a wider context. The framework makes mainly politically-economic changes, progressive trends of education policy and specifics of demands of vocational education. The most important of them are following:

1. Strategic Study on Vocational Education And training, Birks Sinclair & Associates Ltd., 1992 (abbr. SSBS).
2. Renewal of the Educational System in Czech Republic, Analytical evaluation study of Phare RES programme, 1994 (abbr. Phare RES).
3. Changes of the Educational System in Czech Republic (basis study for OECD examiners) and following OECD Examiners' Report on the Educational Policy In Czech Republic, 1995 (abbr. OECD).

Recommendations of these papers respect the tradition and quality of Czech vocational education and make a framework of changes that enables international comparability and stresses bigger flexibility of vocational education and training.

General recommendations demand mainly the following:

q a wider conception of profession profiles and grouping of training branches (approx. up to 20 streams in education)
q stressing general education and a wide-drafted curriculum as a part of the qualification base and facilitating re-qualifications
q key skills integration into the curriculum of all educational tracks
q sequential entry to the labour market
q placing specialisation into higher grades
q introducing modules, which enable a wide scale of curricular variants and diverse specialisation choices
q aims formulation as an output, which can be evaluated
q introducing in-course diagnostic and standardised methods of assessment
q producing a gradual structure of certification related to (four) open levels of vocational education

SSBS recommendations on the process of the development of curricular programmes separate the central, regional and school levels. Country wide directives and a curriculum framework should be produced on the central level, schools should decide about the defining of curriculum according to regional and local demands, interests and pupils' abilities. The SSBS study recommends the introduction of two councils:

1. the State Council for Vocational Education, approving programmes and optional modules
2. the State Council for Certification, defining standards

Several definite recommendations from the proposals have already been implemented in pilot schools.

Analytical evaluation study Phare RES is an important document in the process of the educational system transformation in CR. It deals with following themes:

q Curriculum definition
q Analysis of contemporary curriculum of the Czech school in domestic and international context
q Presumptions of a new curricular policy
q Curriculum evaluation methods
q Theoretical and methodological presumptions for curriculum development

Proposals of OECD examiners basically confirm SSBS recommendations and Phare RES deliberations. Following recommendations are taken as most important in this phase:

q the transition of input control to output control

q the creation of educational and professional standards as a consensus of the educational and profession sphere
q the construction of an institutional infrastructure and mechanisms enabling actual curricular changes

Political recommendation NR. 6 is formulated as a demand to establish an Agency for curriculum, standards and certification in vocational education. It stresses the necessity of a systematic approach and institutional basing of curricular reform as well as in OECD and EU countries. Recommended activity procedure is following: creating a catalogue of qualifications on all levels of secondary vocational education, defining professional standards and subsequently new educational programmes and teaching materials, assessment and certification methods. A connection of an independent institution, dealing with research and development, with decision and social partners is presumed. An importance of curriculum development on a regional level is stressed, too. Examiners also recommended connecting vocational and general sector better and integrate their programmes. These trends strengthen in developed countries, SSBS deals with them, too, and recommends for instance introducing new modules into the curricula of high schools (secondary general education) and considering a transmission of professional training onto a primary school level (9th grade).

2. ANALYSIS OF INPUT PAPERS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PILOT SCHOOLS' EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

An essential principle of secondary school curriculum construction in vocational education is the principle of flexibility and adaptability. It means that the curriculum should be constructed in such a way to enable enough wide corridors for particular educational tracks and allow sufficient freedom for school and pupil profiling and also respect state interests, which are responsible for social continuity by securing the transmission of basic culture ideals of a community, knowledge and skills necessary for social adaptation and professional carrier.

A Curriculum understood in this way enables a wider choice of educational tracks by schools and at the same time fulfils the obligatory and controllable foundation. It requires the intensive participation of pedagogic workers in curriculum development and enables the application of both modular and more common linear objective projecting of the content and aims of education.

Important is also the element of curriculum democratisation and humanisation. It is necessary to substitute the determined understanding of the pupil's personality into the original ideological curriculum construction. An attempt to give wide choices among alternative educational programmes should be stressed as a part of curricular changes. And therefore educational programmes must produce proper conditions to make timetables open and flexible and teaching inner-differentiated according to pupils' interests and abilities.

2.1. Basic curriculum of vocational education as an educational standard

Curricular questions are in the project of Phare pilot school solved as a two-levelled curriculum:

The Basic curriculum expresses obligatory aims, content sets, ratio of parts of general and vocational education and other characteristics in relation to particular levels and streams of vocational education, which are compulsorily projected into school curricula, in a more general manner.

The Basic curriculum was drawn up in the Institute for Vocational Education (abbr. VUOS) firstly as a draft, which was given to pilot schools for evaluation. Then a final version was made, and it become a obligatory presumption for pilot schools' curriculum development.

School curriculum deals with presumptions given as a basic curriculum as educational projects for pilot schools. Every school can, in the framework prescribed by the curriculum, profile its projects according to the regional demands of the labour market, pupils' and parents' interests, school tradition etc.

The school curriculum was created at individual pilot schools as their own document according to VUOS recommendations. VUOS workers worked working on a model school curriculum parallel to this and were provided the schools with results together with the necessary consultation.

This approach corresponds with the SSBS recommendation foremost with its possibility to extend and vary educational tracks during the fulfilment of the obligatory basis. An intensive co-operation of pilot schools with curriculum development, which (if sufficient co-ordination) can contribute to the enforcement of the Phare plan into the awareness of a wider pedagogical public, is to be the intent. It enables the implementation of both the modular system recommended by foreign experts and, in our country the more common, linear object projection of educational aims and content.

The basic curriculum was designed as a document, which is to define nation-wide demanded educational levels and to enforce the priorities of the SSBS into pilot schools. It plays primarily an integrating function, providing the compatibility of educational tracks in the framework of particular streams of education, contributing to the provision of the systematic and sensibility of the whole of the acquired education and to the balance of a general profession, theoretic and basic practical training. It produces a certain opposition to the demands of labour market representatives, who mostly tend to preferences of concentrated specific training. It creates the orientation of a basic curriculum mostly to general education, key skills and basic vocational education. Basic curriculum drafted like this does has not a direct bond to predicated factual output qualification for particular occupations or branches. It was designed in the general education part together for particular levels of education (all streams of education), in the professional part only for particular streams of education.

The framework of construction of the basic vocational education curriculum is composed of levels of education and streams of education.

Levels of education is a category, which enables the vertical differentiation in a system of vocational education according to the demands and connected related possibilities of sequential success on a labour market, or further education. A category of levels of education is made of qualification levels (in our terminology grades of education) used in EU but expresses only knowledge presumption for acquiring a qualification of an appropriate grade. The division is made into five levels, while the basic curriculum for Phare pilot schools was made for the second and third levels of vocational education:
Second level – compulsory school attendance + training for occupation (incl. teaching)

A finished qualification for certain activity incl. tool mastering and acquiring proper work methods is reached on this level. An acquired grade of education enables work, whereby a pupil can apply acquired knowledge and skills.

Third level – compulsory school attendance + training for occupation and extended vocational education or + other vocational education at a secondary school

A pupil gets more theoretical knowledge on this level than on the second. The attained grade of education enables work on an independent practical activity and also on tasks in manufacturing preparation, planning and work co-ordination.

General characteristics of vocational education levels incl. the length of education that include also the appropriate certificates (apprentice certificate, maturity exam) are worked out based on this presumption.

Streams of education is a category, which enables the horizontal differentiation of vocational education by similarity stemming from a content of the professional part of education. It expresses a wider vocational concentration oriented on a certain sector of science, technology, art and their applications in the labour world. The basic curriculum was made for Phare pilot schools in a total of 12 streams of vocational education (6 streams in VUOS, 6 in co-operation with pilot schools), which do not cover the whole spectrum of vocational education. They are the following: Machinery, Electrotechnic, Chemistry, Glass, Ceramics, Textile and Clothing, Construction, Agriculture, Economy, Trade, Services, the Food Sector.

Levels and streams of vocational education are in the basic curriculum defined by the educational aims and characteristics of content branches in particular components of the basic curriculum. These are:

q key skills, which are essential for personal, social and professional development of any pupil and fulfils an integrating role in the framework of the curriculum as a whole
q the general education component, which consists of language, social sciences, natural sciences, aesthetics and development of body culture
q vocational education component, which defines the bases of vocational education in particular streams

The key skills and general education components are defined in the basic curriculum as common for the whole spectrum of educational programmes as a part of a certain level. The vocational education component is defined as a part of a certain level depending on the streams of education.

Key skills are in understood in the basic curriculum as special category of integrating educational aims, which have complete and above-object character, long-lasting validity with practical application, tending to increase the adaptability of a person in a changing environment, his or her adoption closely cohering with the total knowledge level of a pupil. Key skills are the following set of abilities:

q communicative skills – the ability to express oneself in oral and written form according to the situation, compiling written material, explaining and showing, reading and understanding and using the information read
q personal and interpersonal skills – the ability to improve learning and efficiency, use self-understanding, self-control and auto-regulation, to work with others to reach collective aims, receiving responsibility for work
q ability to solve problems and problematic situations – identify and analyse problems, decide, how to solve them, select and suggest solutions optimal in a particular context, giving and fulfilling effective methods for the implementation of solutions
q numeric applications – the ability to use diverse arithmetic and statistical methods important for solving practical situations
q ability to use information technologies – ability to work with a personal computer, use diverse resources of different kinds and character of information in both occupational and private life

The general education component is defined in the basic curriculum as a general educational basis for all pupils on a certain educational level and is characterised by educational aims and content sets. It was used following division into six subsequent sectors:

q Language teaching develops the communicative competency of pupils in his or her mother tongue (or teaching language) and a foreign language, teaches them to enter into interactive contacts with others, helps them apply themselves in society, and to mediate needful information and approach cultural and other values.

q Social sciences education has a multi-disciplinary character, because its basis is created by a set of pieces of knowledge from several science branches (psychology, ethics, political science etc.). Its main aim is the social and personal cultivation of the pupil. It tends to educate him as a social being, as a citizen of a democratic society more than any other education sector.

q Mathematics and natural sciences education play the role of not only general education but mainly, in technical studies, of vocational training. Pupils penetrate deeper into numeric abilities, the learn to understand quantitative phenomena and relations in nature and society.

q Aesthetic education has a conspicuous cultivating and educational purpose, which is implemented either through the pupil's activity or his recognition and understanding of beauty (aesthetics) due to some definite artistic and widely understood aesthetic object of various genres.

q Physical culture development runs parallel to classic Physical education in developing the physical disposition of pupils to habits closely related to body and health care.

The vocational education component is defined in the basic curriculum differentiated for particular streams and covers only a certain part with respect to the general basis of vocational education that gives presumptions for the future leaver's adaptability in his success in work but also for adaptability during education (during the decision or choice of educational tracks or content). The vocational component of basic curriculum does not deal with the sector of vocational education, which is strictly vocational but with the one which makes a basis for this professional part a particularly common basis. It is not usually possible to derive it from the graduate's profile or other forms of expression of ratified qualification, which is approaching the general part of training and key skills. We can say, it includes primarily the preparation of general education (it can not be included in the basic curriculum of general education, because it would loose cross section character of the curriculum common for all educational programmes and subsequent general demands on vocational-theoretical and vocational-practical parts of training, common for all programmes of a particular stream of vocational education. Defining the elements of a specific vocational content are professional standards (leaver's profiles), which are not a part of basic curriculum.

Basic curriculum was made in VUOS co-operating with pilot schools in the spring months 1994. Its advanced version is expected on the monitoring of pilot schools' experiences and detailed objections mainly to the possibility of fulfilling given demands.

2.2. Pilot schools' experiences with application of the basic curriculum

Curriculum development is a complicated and complex process, which takes place on the state, school and class level. Its result are curricular projects. The content and aims in the Czech tradition are set by syllabuses, textbooks and methodical books. They characterise methods and specify organisational forms of teaching. A usual problem of syllabuses as a curricular norm is that the accurate defining of basic compulsory subject matter, which is to be known by all pupils, is missing.

The basic curriculum was provide to pilot schools in the spring of 1994 together with methodical instructions "The process of school curriculum development", which explained a draft of a two-levelled curriculum and containing directions for school curriculum development.

As written above, basic curriculum defines only the necessary basis of knowledge and allows a wide space for further changes in the school curriculum mainly in the following:

q the accommodation of basic education according to the needs of vocational education
q the specific part of vocational education component drafted according to needs of the labour market

Pilot schools projected their own school curricula by this process. School curriculum as a set of definite educational programmes implemented in a particular pilot school was compiled due on the basis of:

1) The basic curriculum. For its use are:
compulsory - demands on particular levels of education defined in the basic curriculum regards the length of education, quantitative demands on the range of general education (45% for the third level, 35% for the second level), educational aims and content sets for the general education and vocational elements;
recommended - educational aims compiled in the basic curriculum for key skills, in a way so that there is the possibility in the school curriculum to select such a level of key skills, which agrees with the demands of subsequent vocational education (e. g. demands on communicative abilities in services).

2) Qualification demands
According to relevancy to labour market demands and to international output comparability of vocational education , the school curricula were constructed to harmonise results of training, mainly in branches ending with an apprentice certificate, with demands on qualification recognised by social partners, mainly employers. Therefore schools were given profession standards created by VUOS, defining activities that must be managed for proper function in a certain occupation.

The school curriculum compiled by particular pilot schools consists of the following basic parts:

q the graduate's profile
q the scheme of educational tracks
q the educational programme (Characteristics of educational programme, Set of syllabuses, possible education modules and key skills)

Pilot schools assisted in the gradual compilation of the school curriculum during the years 1994-96 and similarly in:

q drafting a draft school curriculum for education as a whole given by pilot school (leaver's profile, scheme of educational tracks, characteristics of educational programmes)

q elaborating a school curricula for particular grades (set of syllabuses, possible education modules and key skills)

School curricula development has gone through several stages, while the most problematic of which was the first stage in 1994, when the framework school curricula was created and the school curricula for education programmes for the first grade were compiled. The school curriculum development will be finished by compiling educational programmes for the fourth, and possibly fifth grades in 1997. It is possible to introduce only partial experiences of pilot schools with the application of the basic curriculum according to it.

School curricula development in Phare pilot schools was systematically monitored in VUOS and many experiences and pieces of information were collected from teachers, who projected school curricula with the application of the basic curriculum, by empirical research. The two-levelled process of curriculum development is taken by most of schools as supporting, mainly for general education, whereas the basic curriculum can be used as a functional presumption for school curriculum compilation.

All schools took intensive attendance of their pedagogic workers in school curriculum development as positive (increase in the interest and responsibility of teachers, school profiling etc.). The high level of difficulty in the preparing stage, when the basic curriculum was being compiled into the school curriculum, was confirmed during interviews with teachers. It is also given by the difficulty of untraditional progress of projecting and sometimes by just a partial understanding of some of the principles of the basic curriculum.

Methodical materials given to schools by VUOS were evaluated as functional, although they were sometimes less intelligible for the authors of school curricula. Unclearness primarily applied to key skills compilation, which is a new element in vocational education curriculum.

Target structures of the basic curriculum are taken by pedagogic workers as a necessary factor for unifying compulsory areas of education and as a stabilising element of the subject matter content. They produce a functional framework used by schools during the formulation of a definite school curriculum aims, mainly in the general education sector and in key skills. Schools have better experiences with the defining of demands on graduates in the vocational sector, and they facilitated formulation of aims of the general vocational basis of the educational programmes.

The appropriateness of the basic curriculum aims has until now been evaluated only slightly during the implementation of educational programmes by pilot schools. Their opinions are different depending on the character of a particular school. Comments deal with difficult demands on the second level in mathematics, biology and languages.

Educational aims on the third level are taken as relatively appropriate.

In autumn 1996, VUOS implemented detailed commentary proceedings on the basic curriculum for the second level. Teachers from pilot schools were talking about the possibility to fulfil particular definite educational aims and content sets in particular parts of the basic curriculum.

It is to be changed according to these results. We as well count on the implementation of the proceedings on the basic curriculum for the 3rd level.

We can say that the principle of two-levelled curriculum development has shown in Czech circumstances its advantages and enabled an increase in the wide offer of pilot schools within the unified framework of the basic curriculum. The basic curriculum, as a document defining the obligatory demands on the construction of educational programmes, will be, after final compilation according to comments made thereon, able to be recommended for use in the whole vocational education system as a definition for accepting new MSMT's (Ministry of Education, Youth and P. E.) educational programmes.

School curricula development on pilot schools has shown the important potency and abilities of teachers in pilot schools. It has also shown the high level of difficulty of often disproportional development burdening teachers in normal school operation. In 1996, model educational programmes were developed. They should generalise the best experience acquired during school curricula development and prepare educational programmes, which will be generally useful as they will become a part of school curricula in interested schools after the final compilation.

Model educational programmes drafted like this can serve schools:

q as an instant useful basis for their own school curricula. They will connect only a specific part, e. g. in appearance of specialisation mentioned in the graduate's profile or as optional subjects for pupils, etc.
q as a building element for their school curricula, where they can use only particular parts of the model curriculum, e. g. general subjects, partial vocational elements, etc. for drafting of related educational programmes
q as a methodical example of a specified and extended basic curriculum

Model educational programmes like this can help expanding results of the experiment of Phare pilot schools into whole vocational education system in Czech republic.

3. ANALYSIS OF PILOT SCHOOL CURRICULA

Pupil training at vocational schools has in a contrast to other types of education some specifics. It has several common features with other elements of the educational system, on the other hand, it is different with a close bond to the economic sphere. It has been ever influencing education at secondary vocational schools and mainly education leading to a certificate in given branch.

The school curriculum is a curricular document of each individual school, which defines the set educational programmes implemented at the school. Even though basic curriculum defines with framework characteristics of parts of vocational education guaranteed only by the state, the school curriculum is a complex project of definite educational programmes, which are offered students by the school.

3.1. Projected and implemented school curricula

A variant solution, which would be in harmony with the general requirement to a greater ratio of general education and demand to postpone the moment of decision about the personal profession of pupils, was sought at Phare pilot schools during school curriculum projecting. Therefore a stress was put on the general component of education, widely based educational programmes in mathematics, languages, natural sciences together with concentration on key skills and introduction to the labour world, in the structure of the pilot school curriculum in the first grade. The second grade stressed wide vocational education and an introduction to widely drafted training groups. The third and fourth grades should provide more professional specific vocational education in the context of a related training branch.

Parallel general and vocational education was projected and implemented in the whole curricular system of pilot schools. General and vocational components of education can not be separated, according to the fact that some subjects taken traditionally as general become a part of vocational education or professional training (e. g. foreign language in trade) and on the other hand some traditionally vocational subjects (e. g. information technology, using computers) take on a general character. The measure of general education representation as a traditionally taught subject (Czech language, mathematics, natural sciences, social studies, history, P. E., etc.) is different according to the character of the educational programme and fluctuates between 35% and 45%. Generally, we can say that of subject branches leading to maturita, its share is on the upper end and lower in vocational sectors. Basic tendency leads to the extension of general education in maturita education and on the other hand to decreases in educational programmes leading to an apprentice certificate. Its share is very differentiated according to the demands of subsequent education in particular branches there. All forms of education have also shown a decrease in the average values of total weekly taught compulsory classes, numbers of weekly classes in one grade have also balanced out.

The structure of general education has changed, too. Generally we can say, that foreign language teaching is expanding as well as Czech language and number of mathematics classes are decreasing. An outstanding increase in foreign language teaching is shown in vocational sectors, too. It points to a greater measure of the humanisation of general education component as a reaction to earlier (until 1989) stress on natural sciences and the importance of foreign languages for communication in an open Europe. All these trends show that the ratio in general education in particular educational programmes is always a con-census of demands of general education on one side and demands of definite profession abilities, mainly in vocational sectors on the other.

The vocational component of the curriculum is much more differentiated and it is hard to describe its development. Its average share fluctuates between 55% and 65%. One of the most important aspects of the development of the vocational component of the curriculum is a high measure of its innovation and creation of several new branches. The most often reason for these innovations are labour market demands, changes in the branch the graduate is preparing for and an attempt to make the training high-quality and prepare the adaptable leaver in the private sector, too. The next reason is that attempts to prepare educational suggestions for until now uncovered sectors or suggestions advantageous for girls. It has to be said that the greatest changes in the curriculum are made in those sectors and branches, which are somehow outstandingly (positively/negatively) influenced by the economy or labour market development.

The idea of an integrated first grade was accepted in harmony with the SSBS plan in the projects of pilot school curricula. An Introduction to the Labour World, which was put as a part of common first grade contains general theoretical basis and provided pupils with the possibility of trying occupational activities, representing particular possible streams of further vocational training. presenting particular possible streams of further vocational training. The Introduction to the Labour World should have contained a practical component and also informed about possibilities of enforcement according to existing school profiling to make it function well enough. A wide spectrum of possibilities, which were produced by this approach, were used by just a smaller portion of pilot schools in their projects. In spite of this, The Introduction to the Labour World was very positively evaluated by pilot schools (14 of them). The following facts are taken as its greatest advantages. It provides a summary of vocational training streams, enables the decision about which occupation to select. It informs pupils about practical activities and provides them sectors of training, suggested in following grades. It enables them to acquire essential manual skills and increases their adaptability in diverse work situations. But it is often understood as an analogy to vocational training by pedagogic workers (except for examples, where it is projected as a separate subject).

Although the implementation of a common first grade can be evaluated as successful and needed, it is proved by empirical values that this principle is practically very difficult. Most of the schools agree with the integration by streams and its implementation is taken as satisfying. Development of the first grade conception will probably continue, because stimuli about how to improve the contemporary state are constantly being discovered. E.g. optimisation of branch and steam selection in the second grade, with its bipolar states with a liberal understanding on one side and administrative on the other one, has not been solved until now to the satisfaction of the participants.

Even if one of the biggest problems hindering the conception of a common first grade was known already in the first year, it is very differentiated knowledge level of pupils from primary schools, who were admitted. It did not enable a certain inner differentiation and negatively influenced teaching in the class in schools with a lower number of pupils. Even though the idea of a common first grade was accepted by teachers as essential, empirical knowledge shows that a common first grade contributes very much to a change in the inner atmosphere of the class and school and also the lessons as a basic form of teaching.

One of important SSBS recommendations was the application of system-wide modular organisation in educational content. The purpose was with respect to unusualness in our conditions reduced and model structuring of the content was fully compiled in a few agile pilot schools. The educational module was the basis of this approach and was defined as a diversely large, relatively closed part of education, regarding. the educational programme, which enables the definition of a certain set of teaching situations, activities and subject matter. The educational module is principally different from the understanding of the present syllabuses. Syllabuses define the content, which should be 'carried out' by the teacher, the principle of a module to define expected results of the educational process. The importance is therefore transmitted from the subject matter to the learning activities of a pupil and mainly to his learning results.

Pilot schools, which have practised module structuring of the content have exited from the difficult content and construction standpoint. They preferred modules as independent teaching units with more flexible rules of mutual continuity and compatibility, together with framework structure, defined by level of knowledge.

Module analyses have confirmed that pilot schools tried in project appearance of the school curriculum to enforce demands on the methods of modular solution. Little experience and time insufficiency in the preparation period probably caused some of the modules to be rather classic syllabuses divided into new groupings, by compiling demanded properties. Above-subject approach is rather the exception and if at all realised then only in the vocational sector. Pilot schools, which applied this approach say that module structured subject matter, based rather on outputs, than time used by the student (during studying) can provide greater flexibility. In contrast to the system of changes of convenient sector groups (occupation) which provide the student with a structure of modules with the possibility of improving the timetable without necessity to start at the beginning of qualification process. An easier possibility of content innovation in modules, alternatively flexible using new modules, which reflect new trends and technology enables a great deal of flexibility during the establishment of the educational programme content.

The implementation of the modular education brings into schools several problems in schedule making as well as other implementation problems. A combination of verbal assessment and classic classification acquits best for the assessment of a pupil's results. All seven schools using modular teaching have good experiences with it. The module organisation of educational programmes was projected by all pilot schools separately (by methodical directives), four of them co-operated with either another school or VUOS. Although modular teaching introduction places higher requirements on the schools, pedagogic workers evaluated its contribution very positively. Modules are building blocks, enabling a change of educational suggestion and accommodation according to labour market changes. They also enable the respecting of individual and group conditions in relation to pupils, produce modified educational tracks and attain a specific leaver's profile. Modulated teaching awakens the knowledge of the aim and defines exactly the content subsequently to the specification of educational aims. It gives a clearly defined output and pushes to enforce inter-subject relations. The graduate's profile in certain sectors of training can be easily recognised by particular educational modules, which form the educational track.

According to the experience of pilot schools, it is necessary to say that the module structuring of teaching is reasonable for larger schools and mainly more complex schools and is irrelevant parallel with a structured subject content, which have a clear and logical sequence of thematic groupings as for example with foreign languages.

3.2. Teachers and pupils in the curricular experiment

An experimental selected set of 19 Phare pilot schools with their composition agrees with the requirements in area and demographic representation. It is very heterogeneous according to a pupil's success factors (grades, etc.) in means of girls or students of formal Secondary Vocational Schools in larger cities having better grade averages. There are ± 2,500 pupils and 900 pedagogic workers at pilot schools.

Most of the schools implement beginning with the second grade very variable offer of educational programmes projected in school curriculum. Pupils are being trained (by the state in the third grade) totally in 103 educational programmes (branches and concentrations) on the second level, in 59 educational programmes (branches and concentrations) on the third level and in 13 educational programmes on both the second and third levels. Particular schools offer 4–16 programmes for 2–6 branches, and half of the schools projected at least 10 programmes.

Flexible work groups arose in schools to project, change and extend educational programmes for the preparation of actual and final evaluation, for the development of teaching texts and for suggestion of pupils' projects. Because these pedagogic workers have to do also their old duties, they had to learn new, creative approaches to school curriculum development and were limited by a closely delimited time limit, their work was very exhausting. Although it was demanding, they have taken it as very positive.

Fulfilling the educational aims of the school curricula is relatively successful according to teachers' and headmasters' opinions. These aims are an significant condition for teaching. Although the educational aims are expressed in educational programmes, teachers appreciate that the space for their defining and actualisation must remain open. It enables teachers to develop their creative work and pupils to co-operate on the definition of their work aims, progress planning, anticipation of the course and demands of final assessment.

The sector of key skills is evaluated as a relatively complicated and little worked part of educational programmes. Although they manage to project relatively successfully educational aims of five demanded key skills into school curriculum, they do not manage to compile it into more sophisticated methodical approaches. This work is relatively difficult for teachers but leads to the development of pupils' creativity and they seem, as teachers say, to understand the subject matter better. Work on projects is difficult for pupils, too, because they are not prepared for it (they were not led to independent work at primary schools) and have little communicative abilities. Curricular conception gives greater freedom to the teacher in introducing new methods and work forms (e. g. consultations about excursion, its written evaluation by pupils, mentioning contribution for their branch, etc.).

Pupils' result indicators from particular grades confirm the fulfilling of educational aims. The average grade is 2.5, while girls have 2.2 and boys 2.6 for a longer period. Differences between larger and smaller cities and by the original school type are slightly balancing out. Great differences are between individual schools. We can assume that it is caused rather by different difficulties of classification at different schools than by actual results. A cross assessment of pupils on the second level, planned at the end of the 1996/97 school year will probably enable the awareness and observance of how successfully the educational aims at particular schools are fulfilled.

In 1994/95, when the experiment began, pupils were asked about the conditions of their choice of profession - how well they were informed about the offer of branches at their school, whether it was a contributing factor to them that they could choose the branch at the end of the first year, and where they got the information about their school. They wrote, which level of education they wanted to reach, some of them specified a definite branch of training, they had decided for. A total of 88% of all students were satisfied with their selection. The biggest group of satisfied students is made of pupils from economy-oriented branches and are more clean-cut in their opinions. 87% of pupils are satisfied at their schools. Free answers were mostly used to write about bad experiences (78%) and very rarely to write about good ones (6%). 80% would today make the same selection of a branch as before. It seems that partial changes did not affect the satisfaction of pupils. 80% of their parents are interested in their studies. Two thirds have already decided, what they will do after finishing school, the rest are not sure. Less then a third do not want to continue further studying and want to start employment after finishing secondary school. Economy-oriented students want to continue at universities, technically oriented students are interested in maturita extension. Other differences are not important.

4. SOCIAL PARTNERS IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Preparation for occupation at secondary schools can not take place without the participation of social partners and without influences and observance of the movements of the labour market. All who participate in the vocational education process in Czech Republic are aware that vocational education has reached the stage, where it is necessary to begin to intensively co-operate with people, for whom is the training exists.

Transformation processes cause in our country the development of business, affect employment and bring greater pressure on human resources qualification, especially on vocational education. On the labour market, there is the request for qualified manpower exceeding availability and this produces several problems. Mainly among employers and their unions on the one hand and secondary vocational schools and related state institutions on the other. All this is multiplied by the unknowing partner's changed conditions and insufficient legislation or its absence. The most sophisticated legislation can not even substitute communication between partners and co-operation among all social partners in the region.

4.1. Participation of social partners in school curricula development and implementation

It can be said that all schools co-operate with social partners in some manner. It is a result of an investigation of all pilot schools conducted by VUOS. Only eight of them participate in educational programmes development, eleven are not, which should be taken as relatively high percentage. Social partners at 14 schools co-operate on the graduate's profile development, at 18 of them they co-operated on providing the practical part of vocational training (one school did not answer this question) and at eleven of them are joined the preparation and implementation of leaving exams.

The necessity to strengthen participation of social partners in projecting and implementing the form of curriculum of vocational education and training is seen in the evaluation of all the research on pilot schools. Co-operation with social partners takes place mostly on the local or regional level and is more spontaneous than systematic. Proper co-operation is missing by producing new branches, curriculum innovations, legislative changes and final exams. It is necessary to support a co-operation between social partners and schools and support it as a main requirement of vocational education. Curricula correspond mainly to the demands of the labour market. Therefore it is necessary to orient attempts at making a whole system of co-operation among schools and social partners and define competencies on the national regional and school level. If particular schools closely co-operate on school curricula development with labour institutions and watch the movement on the labour market, consult educational programmes with social partners, graduates do not have problems penetrating into the working process and are proved by labour institutions to be applicants for occupation in a relatively low rate and for a short time. If this principle is not respected, leavers have problems finding a job. One of the factors, by which parents assess the quality of the school, is also the placement of pupils in the labour market and their penetrating the work process.

A not less important role in finding a job is played by one of the tools of active employment policy, signing contracts with employers, to work for them during vocational praxis, by graduates with proper financial aid provided by labour institutions.

4.2. School curricula evaluation according to labour market demands and possibilities of graduates' applying

The original system of unions was created as a reflection of the occupation system in particular branches of national economics with the aim to prepare mostly workers and technicians for clearly defined jobs. A certain placement of the worker was expected in the profession he was trained for and the mobility of manpower with interests in a person's options or further profession changes were not considered. The whole system originally was built on planned manpower placement, only its failure and necessity to free the system led to thoughts of a wider leaver's profile.

Generally, we can say that the set of educational programmes of pilot schools correlates with development of economic re-structuring and the changing structure of demand for qualified work. This is set mainly by structural changes of pupils' inquiries into secondary vocational education – study applicants. Their demands and interests clearly reflect actual changes in the economic sphere and labour market (decreasing employment in stagnating branches and greater enforcement in past sub-dimensional branches). It is evidenced by huge changes in leavers' profiles in teaching and studying sectors, which best reflect a live reaction of vocational education curriculum to inquiry changes. But it is rather influencing of the actual situation on the labour market, than medium and long-lasting tendencies of economic structure development, which would be relevant but are predicable on a general plane only.

Contemporary structural changes in the economy of the CR tend to repair macrostructure deformations from past development (abundant representation of agriculture, mining and industry as a whole) towards the transmission of production factors into the tertiary sector. A share of this sphere in employment exceeded 50 % two years ago, while the biggest growth was made in banking and insurance. In the framework of a global decrease in industry position in a transforming economy, several changes in its product as a rise of the processing industry were made, although the share of production and basic inter-products (metallurgy, chemistry, wood processing) is still too big (50% of industry). The problem is that these unbalanced phenomena cause regional disproportion. Although this situation is not reflected in the unemployment rate, they are seen in structure of educational programmes. The content changes are as follows:

q limiting educational programmes targeted at training for an occupation in stagnating sectors (e. g. agriculture, mining and some industry branches with current decrease in production such as machinery and electrotechnics)

q quantitative development of educational programmes and growth of the spectrum of educational possibilities oriented towards occupations in conjuncture branches (tertiary sphere, building industry, electrotechnics)

Mentioned elements of content innovation are enforced in the curricula of pilot schools. It shows great innovation of pedagogic workers, who knew that existing educational programmes were neither useful nor appropriate. A suggestion for preparation for a profession or management of a firm is outstandingly manifested. Subject matter concentrated on marketing, management, financial relations, etc. becomes a part of primary vocational education curriculum. Schools included into their curricula preparation for small manufactures and technologies, training for business and service activities.

School curricula are trying to tend to the quantitative development of educational programmes for the maturity educational level by diverse methods. This tendency is set mainly by a stronger inquiry for maturity educational level, which had been stagnating in the past. A change in the curricular structure in order to increase its quality and demand is certainly positive. Often complications appear at some pilot schools, which do not have enough qualified teachers or a tradition for teaching on this level, with the implementation of certain parts of educational programmes. The tendency towards educational programmes development on a maturity level is to be characterised like this:

q a part of vocationally technical programmes is generalised in such a way that it nears the general educational stream, but is much more flexible and practically oriented (e. g. preparation for the tertiary sector as e. g. management-oriented branches, etc.)
q an important number of educational programmes, which enable the attainment of the maturity level of knowledge for leavers of 3-year-long profession sectors in daily studying, is rising
q a part of general technical educational programmes is transformed by including a higher rate of practical training enabling contemporary apprentice certificate reach. It happens mainly in branches preparing for stagnating sectors, where a possibility of placement in the labour market is expanding (e. g. machinery, electrotechnics, agriculture) or there, where it is demanded by a character of work (e. g. construction industry, food sector, etc.).
q a part of originally vocational education programmes is extending and transforming into a two-levelled study ending with the maturity exam
q a part of educational programmes (mainly in craft) stays or increases in its demand for practical training, while the sector stays demanding in terms of manual abilities
q a part of vocational educational programmes is concentrating on the development of simpler manual skills including the shortening of preparations

It has to be said that the communication of educational sphere including scholar institutions with the sphere of social partners represented mostly by employers is nowadays very problematic, at the end of this chapter on relations among school curricula problematic labour market demands and possibilities of enforcement. These institutions do not feel the necessity to influence the education and training of future qualified manpower, due to their own problems with understanding their paths of development. The Labour market does not signalise any important problems in employment or the insufficiency of reaching qualified manpower. This situation causes the curriculum of vocational education to be in most cases affected by changes in the pupil's demand – and inner school requirements.

5. PUPILS' REAL RESULT ASSESSMENT AND INFORMATIONAL VALUE OF CERTIFICATES

During the process of global liberalisation of the educational system, diversification of scholar subjects and the increasing of pedagogic autonomy of schools and teachers, a new question has appeared. How to objectively provide the demanded quality of education. Certification is also closely related to it. A mistake of contemporary vocational training is that a young person can finish it only at the end of chosen linear track. If there were a possibility of getting a certificate of acquired knowledge after each successfully graduated period, it would motivate pupils and inform employers.

Materials on assessment were at pilot schools compiled as an actual project of inner assessment of pupils with input information about the contemporary state and purpose of inclusion, which is to be implemented by the school. Questions on how to process assessment and suggestions for the final assessment and certification were compiled. The Pupil's assessment in the traditional system was mostly by classification but by new understanding pilot schools have had to find other forms and approaches to fulfil the humanisational and analytical function of assessment.

Because motivation is closely related to assessment, inner models of assessment were practised at pilot schools and led to the diagnostic function and common search for new approaches to the pupil. Besides traditional forms of knowledge and ability checks, schools included also untraditional forms as didactic tests (mostly non-standard), criteria evaluating educational modules and pupils' projects. One of the important factors of assessment in schools became a changing opinion on a pupil's mistake, which is not taken as his personal insufficiency but as a natural phenomenon of the educational process and resource of new knowledge for both the pupil and his teacher.

5.1. Positive and negative features of operational

and output assessment

Information about the character of operational assessment on schools and about opinions on implementation of final assessment are in the information mainly from the projected school curricula by pilot schools. A separate part on assessment became a part of school curricula in 1996. Schools should have elaborated summary information about employed types of assessment with concentration on educational programmes in all grades.
The above mentioned materials prove that assessment at Phare pilot schools does not exist out of contemporary legislation. New methods of teaching often result in that old sorts of assessment are not suitable and sometimes obstruct new methods of organisation and teaching management.

Teachers respect diversity of educational aims, mainly differences between collective – classification based on examination, and formative – based on a pupil's abilities practised during vocational activities. Individual examinations and non-standard written tests created by teachers remain the main recourses of assessment. Besides this, individual pupils' work as projects, essays and compiled works, etc. are assessed.

Traditional approaches, which stress the importance of qualification, were not overcome and leads to the fact that oral exams make up an important part of all school lessons. Because of this, teaching is over-weighed by partial examining and frequent grading. Many schools even nowadays keep in existence a routine for examining one pupil at least twice per classification period (half of a year), write 2–4 tests and 1–2 complex written exams in Czech language class and mathematics as reported by pilot schools. This attempt to assess operationally as a certain form of activation and encouraging the pupil towards a higher performance. The problem is rooted in the preference for partial knowledge and skills. This system prefers learning knowledge by heart with a small stress on productive activities and solving new problems.

A pupil is assessed twice a year in a report by this operational assessment with grades 1 – 5. This classification scale is compulsory and therefore schools that use other forms of operational assessment (e. g. by module education), convert it into this classification. Verbal assessment, which is used by schools, but is, in fact, just an appendix is related to it.

Grading seems to be less proper in some specific cases as assessment of vocational training, which is set by the complexity of preparation, and its concentration on manual abilities. Assessing resources mean here the summary works, where the accommodation of skills, independence and activity of the pupil, quality of the product, work and site, management, work safety are assessed. In this case, the calculation of the grade is very difficult and can not reflect diverse aspects of the work assessment.

Problems during assessment by the 5-grade scale exist also in case of modular teaching. It is more appropriate to use a point-system or assess the whole in terms of "the pupil passed/failed" for criteria definition in all modules. The duty to grade has become an obstacle for the implementation of the real modules' contribution in that way, they disable independent certification of separate modules, to prove success in them and not to disrupt further continuity.

Separate questions are created by assessment of key skills. Most of the pilot schools implement assessment based on pupils' achievement during their work on projects. Success of acquiring definite skills can be indicators only after a long-lasting and complex observance and assessment of pupils' professional behaviour during work on real problems connected with solving pupils' projects. This is the only way of undertaking the formative influence of the school on pupil's personality and judge his ability to apply partial knowledge and skills in real life during solving complex work situations. Mainly pupils' relation to work and team co-operation, measure of responsibility to fulfil collective tasks, activity and innovation, solutions, ability to communicate appropriately are assessed. But the assessment of these complex abilities is converted back into traditional grades in particular subjects. Pupils' solutions in projects affect the mark in the thematically closest subject. Schools do not understand this way as optimal, nevertheless no other way is allowed by legislation. They demand verbal assessment of such qualities, which can not be expressed by a number. It seems that operational assessment based only on classification creates the image of a pupil's assessment more plain and orients educational process towards the reproduction of acquired knowledge, rather to active acquisition and complex abilities enforcement. It would be important to extend the inclusion of verbal assessment in cases, where the grade has insufficient informational value.

The Final assessment of pupils at the end of the educational programme can not be analysed, now, because final exams of second level graduates will take place at pilot schools at the end of the 1996/97 school year and maturity exam at the end of the 1997/98 school year. We can therefore only discuss pilot schools' suggestions of what should the leaving exam look like. It was elaborated in the school curriculum for third grades of the second level of vocational education.

Most of the schools do not suggest ideas, which would basically overstep the contemporary legislative framework. It means that exams are organised by the school, do not have an expert appearance and pupils are assessed by a commission. Schools come out with ideas on how to correct the contemporary state.

It is requested to inter-connect all three – written, practical and oral – parts. The written exam is usually introduced in max. length of 300 minutes. Some of the schools suggest interesting ideas. For instance the written exam could include writing materials for the practical exam or verify ability to solve a complex problem. Pupils should make a certain product or do some work during the exam. lasting 2–3 days. Oral examination lasting 15–20 minutes should come out of 15–20 given themes and should be summarised according to the pilot school. An attempt to complex construction of the exam incl. vocational thematic projects implemented during the studying is required.

The opinions of pilot schools on the creation of the commission agree in the demand for a full- value representation of employers or a greater percentage from the sphere of employers even during the exam projection. It is needful to take it as the most important suggestion for changes in contemporary legislation.

Pilot schools' suggestions for the maturita exam on the third level will be available in the school curriculum, which will be prepared by schools in spring, 1997. These materials can de included in next period.

5.2. Informational value of output certificates in relation to pupils, school, the educational system and social partners

Certificates given to pupils, who have passed the exams necessary for studying finishing at secondary vocational schools, leaving exam report, maturity exam report, belong to 'papers, which certify important fact or rights'. They are included in the group of documents, whose types and features are set by ministry of education. It also decides their appearance, process their lists in the framework of valid forms and ensures their properties are legal.

Data, describing the type of the exam, its dates and results, branches, type of a school, data about the subject, which created this certificate, written on the certificate are the basis for fulfilling the certificate's function. Because passing exams is a condition given by the school law, the certificates prove through a supporting paper about completion of the exam also acquired knowledge. As its certificate it also proves a qualification, which is demanded by several employers (e. g. state institutions) and also decides the graduate's salary class.

Certificates have an important function as a certificate of attained level of education during competence to enter the next educational level. A leaving exam report enables its owner to enter specific forms of education for acquiring complete secondary knowledge. Its attainment together with complete secondary vocational education is a formal condition to the entry into university education. The entrance itself is decided by relevant educational institutions according to knowledge criteria and results attained in past studies.

The linkage of a certain examination type to an educational programme (studying or vocational sector) written on the certificate is based on documents written by ministry of education . There is also a determined way of finishing studying, type of exam and certificate mentioned compulsory in a leaver's profile or related branch. The relevant branch, mentioned on the certificate proves the qualification of its owner and is a document important to employers regarding the leaver's employment and salary. Qualification presumptions of education by particular sectors or concentration are set by legislation for only vocational professions in health and social care, consulting , and in education.

The Certificate as a document of successful completion of a given sector of education or training (type or concentration of the school) evidences abilities of the owner to work in regulated occupations, work functions or specific activities (e. g. crafts).

In the countries, with which the Czech Republic has a pact of common certificate ratification (e. g. Slovakia) certificate functions are comparable with the Czech ones. The same thing works in countries, who have signed multilateral international contracts on the validity of such documents of education and who have adapted our certificates in a certain way by a contract dealing with both further education and employment with social advantages.

In the past, legislation defined necessary qualifications for particular occupations, graduating related sectors. These arrangements were, however, explained in many mutations. Therefore, they were cancelled and nowadays the basic structure of occupations and educational sectors is defined on the level of recommendations. A demand for the appropriate knowledge level remains for the budget sphere of the national economy as a qualification requirement for working in diverse situations. Professional standards are declared by legislation for only some occupations in the labour catalogue.

Evaluation of the qualification attained by graduating in particular educational sectors according to activities performed in praxis is the competency of the employers. The definite branch is given as the next qualification demand in state budget organisations required by its management, if it is not mentioned in the labour catalogue. Definite knowledge – vocational property is demanded in some occupations. It can be defined for different occupations, functions or sets of professional activities in different ways. It can be also proved by the certificate of acquired knowledge in some cases. In other cases the worker needs to go through training or a course created by the organisation itself. An important part of the qualification is not only the acquired knowledge but also acquired experience, and professional praxis. This is the reason for using a tool of active employers policy – signing contracts with employers to employ graduates to get the praxis. Social institutions support them by financial aid.

To summarise all of this, we can say that school knowledge in praxis is differentiated by levels of acquired knowledge, which are taken as a general measure of abilities to manage different occupations. Evaluation of property of qualification is the employer's problem. There is a few exceptions only in generally working and state budget organisations.

A direct, due to legislation obligatory, relation between particular occupations (work process) and qualification attained by learning or training for the occupation, does not exist, in this view. It is reflected in the legislation of the labour market, which talks about appropriate occupation, without precise specifications of its criteria in relation to acquired knowledge and past training. The most important are the demands of employers in practical decisions. Acquired praxis and interests, which should be in harmony, are respected by social institutions.

According to the fact that contemporary work legislation reflects the situation in other European countries, the attempts of these states to make changes in terms of co-operation with social partners, who should provide the uppermost reputation of vocational education and studying branches, where are their graduates enforced, is reasonable.

6. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF PILOT SCHOOLS' EXPERIMENT

The essential presumption for curricular policy and the educational programmes conception in a democratic society is the approach to the pupil, who is being vocationally educated. It stresses his role as a human individual with rights to develop all positive strengths and possibilities to his own benefit as well as to society. The value orientation is also changed with stress on education to democratic citizenship, enforcement of human rights and freedom, to pan-human ethic values. It means orientation to the psychological side of the educational process, to changes in school climate, education to communication, tolerance and the European dimension of education.

The present development of the transformation of the educational system shows, that the centre of cultivation process must be taken out of a sum of information to a pragmatic orientation in experience, organise them and use them. Education organised like this must fit into the process of education dynamics, activity, inner motivation, interests in creative thinking. The process of curriculum development has been intensively democratised since 1990. Progressive schools, informal teachers' groups and independent groupings of experts with a deeply profiled programme have played an important role in the innovations of the existing curricula as well as elaborating new ones.

The transformation of vocational education is now entering a new stage. Its task will be to expand attained results concentrated on new qualities and aims, good co-operation aiding the schools. Traditional school reforms go through the system upside down (from the deciding component of the system), contemporary innovation trends use another presumption. They reflect 'the reality of the basis' of scholar praxis and point towards theory and policy on the other side. They arise from practical needs, push to lay changes 'down' and are saturated with research results. This trend demands decrease in the traditional studying and vocational sectors and produces new ones, widely projected, providing high flexibility according to labour market demands. New aim standards must be introduced for them – educational and professional, which will be constructed in such a way as to be comparable in terms of main goals with output standards in EU countries. Flexibility in training enables also the destruction of barriers existing between vocational and studying branches. It will, by the way, enable to construct also transitional types of sectors between general and vocational education.

Overstepping barriers of education itself and close co-operation with social partners – mainly with representatives of employers and social institutions should be a outstanding feature of further vocational education curriculum development.

6.1. Evaluation of curriculum development results and experiment purposes

Curricular conception is not absolutely new in the Czech vocational education system. In 1990, VUOS disclosed, in its suggestion for a new conception of vocational education, the importance of curricular policy as tool of management of educational content. Principles of its implementation explained in a document included into project of MSMT to the transformation of the Czech educational system (1991) and according to the positive reaction of a national discussion on transformation projects (evaluated in 1992) continued in curriculum development. It is projected to give a certain guarantee for a certain level of vocational education by the state on the one hand and also enable the autonomous influence of the school – region on a changing dynamic part of the vocational education content. In later development, the conception of curriculum, which arose during the use international trends, was influenced by discussions with foreign experts thanks to Phare (mainly during SSBS development with experts from Denmark since 1995). Since 1994, the curricular approach has been verified in vocational education experimentally at pilot schools in the Phare VET programme.

One of the essential purposes of this programme is to produce a framework of a country wide curriculum, which would support the conception of management of vocational education through obligatory educational aims. Suggestions for its construction on the central level confirm that teachers at vocational schools await a country wide document, which would define the framework for a global educational policy. The projected basic curriculum as an educational standard accepts fully these demands. It characterises the basic framework for the vocational education system as a whole, defines demands on particular educational programmes in the area of aims and content (or also further aspects). This project assumes that the basic curriculum as a country-wide educational standard will be obligatory for the organisation of any vocational education, which is understood as public, which has within its framework, recognised certificates issued by the state and is also financed from public funds. A well elaborated, basic curriculum following model education programmes are expected from the methodical viewpoint.

6.2. Recommendations for implementation in whole vocational education system

Information gained during evaluation confirms that the programme of development of 19 Phare VET pilot schools continues in harmony with demands of modern vocational education understanding, either following conceptual aims of the Strategic study or other conceptual materials on the transformation of the Czech vocational education. Important innovation factors such as the expansion of educational selection of particular education institutions, postponing of specialisation and pupil's qualified choice, strengthening of general education and general vocational basis during stressing key skills, schools' connection into educational programmes development, etc. correspond to the more general development trends of Czech vocational education and should be in the near future implemented by other schools, too. The experiment of Phare pilot schools plays a unique role, which opens new dimensions to vocational education in CR in harmony with the whole transformation.

The following set of recommendations, which follows the experiment of Phare pilot schools goes for the entire system of vocational education and stands for certain priorities of curricular policy as a part of whole education policy in a sector on vocational education and preparation. Corresponding reasons and analyses can be found in the above chapters.

Recommendation No. 1: To provide legislation accepting the educational standard of vocational education

It is necessary to anchor the educational standard of vocational education as a basic curriculum in legislation to provide a certain educational level in relation to particular attained levels of education at diverse schools in the whole Czech Republic. It is also important for the professional sphere and placement on the labour market that the educational level correspond to the labour market's demands, also be transparent enough and the differences in schools' qualities not be so huge. The conception of a basic curriculum as an educational standard is based on defining following factors:

q the position and function of vocational education by particular educational levels in relation to corresponding attained levels of knowledge
q framework definition of educational aims and content sets by particular levels and streams of education, which provide enforcement of basic values and traditions of society in the educational process and produces presumptions for their enforcement in the labour market in the form of graduate's knowledge, ability and habits

The basic curriculum is constructed in such a way, as to specify basic (standard) demands on created and evaluated definite educational programmes of schools by a presumed or declared level of given knowledge and depending on the educational content of the appropriate stream of vocational education, or also type of education (vocational, general vocational). The given educational standard is obligatory for newly rising educational programmes, either verified as generally valid (state, model) or as definite educational programmes of particular schools.

Particular components of the basic curriculum define the necessary basis of education guaranteed by the state and allow a wide space in the definite educational programmes mainly for:

q accommodation and detailed specification of the general component of education according to demands following vocational education
q construction of the specific component of vocational education according to demands of presumed definite placement of leavers on the labour market

Differences between the compound of general and basic vocational education are minimised in definite educational programmes and they can also be connected. This happens mostly with general education with prevailing preparation for the vocational component and with vocational basis, which is integrated for several branches. Educational programmes should not consist of two mechanically separated components of general and vocational education but a wide spectrum of educational elements different by way of their generality; they contain general subject matter connected with the social and cultural function of the education as well as vocational specifically connected with profession education.

Recommendation No. 2: To introduce a two-levelled system of curricular documents development

Such a system of vocational education, which is able to react flexibly to changing demands and conditions in the labour market, is most important. The suggested system produces a sufficiently wide space for particular educational pathways and keeps sufficient freedom for profiling of both the school and a pupil together with respecting interests of the state, which is responsible for the social continuity of the whole society. The two-levelled system of curricular documents development enables the extension of the choice of educational pathways by schools and fulfils the compulsory and controllable basis. Effective implementation of this system is suggested in the following forms:

the basic curriculum (developed on the central level), which contains characteristics of particular educational forms, defining general components of education (educational aims and content sets), defining key skills for particular educational levels and defining basic vocational components of education for particular levels and streams of education

q educational programmes (developed as a model or directly in educational institutions), which define the conception, content and process of a certain educational track

The Educational programme is the lowest element in the system of educational projects. It defines the conception, content and process of a particular educational track. Particular educational programmes contain a leaver's profile, characteristics of a related educational track, timetable or other quantitative expression of subject proportions (by modular education distribution of a matrix), a set of syllabuses or educational modules and key skills elaboration. School curriculum is then a complex project of diversified offer of a defined school. It consists of information about a school's profile, educational track scheme and a set of educational programmes.

Recommendation No. 3: To support development of model educational programmes

The curricular documents development is a complicated and complex process, which takes place on the state, school and class levels. Not every educational institution has received appropriate conditions for the development of high-quality educational programmes, and therefore it is necessary to support and produce mechanisms of model educational programmes development in groups of teachers as well as related institutions.

These programmes would be used generally in all educational institutions, which would be interested in them.

The model education programme is an example of the relevant project of educational programme. It is constructed as a generally needful, and after further compiling can be included into school curricula or particular schools, which are interested to teach according to it. It is designed to serve schools as:

q an instantly functioning educational programme
q material for building school curricula, where only particular parts of a model curriculum can be used, e. g. general subjects, incomplete parts of the vocational components, etc. for construction of related educational programmes
q a methodical example of hardening and elaborating the basic curriculum

Recommendation No. 4: To produce a mechanism for the assessment as a part of the basic curriculum

Nowadays, the question, whether to include into the basic curriculum also more general principles cohering with pupil assessment (function, methods, forms), and output control (leaving and maturita exams), into which external evaluators and social partners should be connected, or not, is debated. In our condition these themes of operational and leaving assessment are traditionally a matter of law norms but in the appearance of general principles could possibly become a part of the basic curriculum fixed in legislation.

In secondary education, the tradition of operational assessment has been kept. The teacher tries to assess the pupil the more often the better and therefore possesses information current for the entire time dealing with his success in certain subject. It is taken as a form of encouraging the pupil to perform better. Teachers at pilot schools use a diverse scale of possibilities for internal assessment. These are suggested changes and additions to the internal assessment:

q do not assess social studies, use 'completed/did not complete' instead
q enable (undertake experiments) by modular teaching and vocational training two-levelled assessment 'passed/did not pass'
q use points
q give certificates evidencing completed modules
q include a appendix with verbal assessment about key skills to the report

Teachers recognise differences in the aims of assessment, a difference between assessment and classification and problems caused by confrontation of the official approach (classification based on grades received by testing) and intuitive needs to assess pupil according to his abilities applied during school activities (classification based on diagnostic investigation, project work assessment, measurements, etc.). Analysis of these phenomena exceeds the framework of the experiment of pilot schools (it is, in fact, a confrontation of two different conceptions, which lie for example in a different attitude towards assessment – one stresses grades, the other one words). Solving these problems can not be accomplished in sectors of pedagogical research.

Recommendation No. 5: To support and create conditions for the systematic co-operation of the educational sphere with social partners

Nowadays, the co-operation with social partners on the local, regional and state levels during the development, introduction and innovation of educational standards, professional standards and also definite school and model educational programmes is not sufficient.

Social partners should intensively attend to the defining of social demands in the labour market. Their qualification requirements in particular occupations can be resources of professional standards and are projected into profiles of leavers of educational programmes for the second educational level. Educational programmes for the third level are much more weakly connected to the profession, because intellectual abilities and more general competencies useful for a wider spectrum of occupations are re-weighed.; the possibility to construct certain profession standards is relatively small.

Mainly employers' representatives should attend these debates about these questions and find new solutions according to international mobility of manpower and comparability of outputs and certificates. This demand is acute mainly in relation to the participation of employers' sphere representatives in leaving exams. It means an active role for these representatives, not only participation without possibility to affect the assessment or exam construction. They should also co-operate with the preparation of the exam. It would adjust pupils' training to their future work enforcement.

Recommendation No. 6: To produce an independent institution dealing in course with all key questions of the whole system of vocational education

A complex solution to all above mentioned problems related to the systematic approach to the transformation of vocational education is not possible without greater effectiveness and transparency of the whole system. It is necessary to make an effective mechanism for operational changes in curriculum in all forms and types of vocational education on the state level. The most effective solution seems to be in this context that one, which arises from suggestions by OECD examiners leading to the establishment of the Agency for curriculum, standards and certification in vocational education, included in the report showed as reasons and institution management. Because of the fact that the system of vocational education is influenced by several departments (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Regional Development, etc.), it is necessary, that this agency be independent and not be influenced by any of them. VUOŠ (which was suggested as the base of this institution in the examiners' report – after its re-structuring and some additions) was presented also during the evaluated experiment at Phare pilot schools (where VUOŠ guaranteed mainly the curricular area) as an experienced expert institution, prepared to fulfil given tasks in full range and on the demanded level.

Recommendation No. 7: To provide a wide campaign for teacher training in the projecting of educational programmes

If we assume that educational institutions are able to create their own educational programmes, it is necessary (to provide certain qualities of developed educational programmes) to educate teachers in projecting educational programmes and also to put these questions into the syllabuses of faculties, which prepare future teachers. Preparation regards the development of school curricula by the compulsory standard have not been an activity the teachers were prepared for and which was a part of their work. It seems, in relation to accepting the principle of the two-levelled curriculum development, that it is necessary to provide education in this sector in such a way that future teachers being prepared at universities and at least a part of teachers teaching at schools managed to cope with new demands.

The curriculum development in vocational education and with it related questions of assessment and certification can be taken as the most important part of development of education transformation. The solution of this curricular development must take into consideration three essential factors closely related to vocational education: personality development, labour market development, economy development.

TEACHER TRAINING

Jana ŠVECOVÁ

Miloš BLECHA
Pavel DOMBROVSKÝ
František MOŠNA
Jaroslav ŠINDELKA

INTRODUCTION

As a part of Phare VET Evaluation Project the pilot schools experiment that is in progress is being evaluated. The teaching staff training of these schools is the topic of this report, that is teachers, vocational training masters and instructors, and it includes the whole system of secondary education. The analysis of managerial staff training is not realised because problems concerning management are under a complex analysis of another work group.

Based on the acquaintance with the main strategic materials, especially the Strategic Review of Vocational Education and Training, with Czech MOE materials: Quality and Accountability, OECD Reviews of National Policies in Education: The Czech Republic, but also with other relevant materials, particularly with all reports on the progress of Phare VET pilot schools experiment, the work plan of the group was drawn up. The objectives of the work group and the method of empirical research were set.

The following report that evaluates the situation of vocational school staff training with the emphasis on the experience gained at pilot schools contains six chapters plus this introduction. The first chapter mentions the main aspects of the new approach to vocational training because it affects the situation of educators in a great way including their in-service training. In the second chapter, deep analysis of the changes in the content of education and the effect it has had on the teacher's workload is addressed. The third chapter deals with pilot schools staff in-service training from the point of view of the content and organisation including the findings from the empirical research that has been performed at all 19 pilot schools by the members of the team. The forth chapter includes the views on the proposals and recommendations including the Strategic Study and the fifth chapter includes the views on the OECD Review. The conclusions and recommendations are in the sixth chapter.

1. PHARE PILOT SCHOOLS

Before analysing the subject of this report – the pilot school staff training – it is necessary to mention briefly the main features of the next approach to vocational training that has started at these schools because it forms an important and crucial background for assessing the starting position of the pilot school teaching staff for their in-service training.

The reform of the vocational training and education system in the Czech Republic within the Phare Programme began experimentally during the 94/95 school year at 19 selected pilot schools (secondary vocational schools, integrated secondary schools and secondary technical schools) in different regions of the Czech Republic.

The Strategic Review of Vocational Education and Training became the conceptual starting point of the reform that has been prepared by Phare experts, Birks Sinclair & Associates Ltd. for the Czech and Slovak Republics. The aim of the long-term reform is to contribute to the transformation of the system of secondary vocational education and training from the point of view of the changing requirements on qualification of employees that the economic reform and re-structurisation at the labour market brings with itself. The changing conditions of the labour market need a kind of youth vocational training that will enable young people to innovate their qualification, extend it or change their professional orientation.

In line with the above mentioned conceptual starting points the new approach to education and training at secondary vocational schools, secondary technical schools and integrated secondary schools puts an emphasis on more broadly drafted vocational and technical courses which means training of qualified workers in a lesser number of broadly oriented groups of professions. Newly drafted curricula emphasise in a bigger manner the development of basic skills and the training of workers who have attained higher degrees of general education, the ability to work under conditions that require multiple qualifications and who are more highly adaptable as secondary school leavers in the world of labour in the market economy. The features of the new approach to vocational education and training within the Phare Programme are:

q to draw up on its own on the school level a complete educational programme including school curriculum
q to move the point of pupil's decision regarding his/her professional career to the second year of his/her studies
q to introduce a widely drafted, unified first year of studies with a large proportion of general subjects
q to introduce the subject "Introduction to the World of Labour" for the easier orientation of pupils
q to strengthen the teaching of information technologies from the first year
q to make the teaching more effective by using new methods and forms of work
q to put influence on coping with key skills considering all pupils
q to take an active part in the in-service training of the teaching staff and school management
q to modernise the technical equipment of classrooms and laboratories
q to obtain a partnership with schools in the EU
q to pass acquired experience along to other schools in the Czech Republic
q to widen the spectrum of offered educational paths
q to find and obtain co-operation with social partners

The fulfilment of the above mentioned aims that have been set for pilot schools has required, of course, different approaches towards the teaching staff at schools within the experiment.

2. THE SITUATION OF TEACHERS AT PILOT SCHOOLS

2.1 The effect of the content of education on the activities of teachers

One of the main objectives of pilot school activities is: in selected ways the development, introduction and evaluation of a new, more flexible and more widely based curriculum, including evaluation that will be internationally compatible. That is why it was necessary for pilot schools to design the complete school curriculum that corresponds to the Basic Curriculum prepared by the Research Institute of Vocational Education (VÚOŠ) for the Phare Programme. This curriculum sets the minimum content of education for individual parts of education (a kind of a standard – basic subject matter) and other important parameters of curriculum.

At all pilot schools a quite large group of teachers and members of management devised their own, complete and specific educational programmes that respect the ideas of the Phare project: maximum horizontal and vertical transition within the system of study.

The pilot schools also had to devise not only new syllabuses that had to include the minimum percentage of general subjects but also the profiles of leavers, the schemes of educational paths with possible transition and with follow-up post-secondary education etc.

Although the aim of this work is not to analyse the content of education in the Phare VET, it is necessary to understand that it is the design of the content (curriculum, educational modules etc.) that has been the main problem of most of the teachers at pilot schools in the observed period. The questions of curriculum were given the largest attention from the management, methodological and control authorities of Phare VET but sometimes were detrimental to other components.

The mentioned situation influences dominantly all activities of the teachers who were included in its realisation from his/her point of view. The introduction of this experiment was affected by a large demand on the workload with a mainly negative factor – considered mainly to be small amount of time. Especially at schools with complex module structures of content of education, it was necessary to work-up all educational programmes in this new and demanding form, sometimes more than a thousand pages long.

The demand of the content is transformed into the teaching. Strengthening the information technologies in the 1st year and their application in vocational subjects have a big influence on the teacher's activities from a large number of points of view. Also the position of vocational training masters who teach "Introduction to the World of Labour" is changing. The pupil must obtain a clear view of the ways of vocational training and masters take the position of workshop teachers where it is not solely the analogy of vocational training. If the master is put into such a position his/her prestige and approach towards his/her job changes. However, the mentioned pace of activities requires the sensitive personnel policy of the school management.

2.1.1 THE DESIGN OF EDUCATIONAL DOCUMENTS

In the field of general education, commonly available textbooks have been always used. The teachers then create from them a series of tasks, tests, workbooks etc. In the field of vocational subjects the situation is somewhat different. Due to the absence of teaching materials mainly considering information science and automatisation it has been necessary to create them oneself. The final arrangement, form and realisation depends on the various technical equipment and possibilities of pilot schools.

The attempt by pilot schools was to unify this work and make planned progress. The support work on the realisation of this new curriculum, such as the design of teaching materials and aids, expert reports, questionnaires for evaluating textbooks, lists of teaching materials etc., is based on the high proficiency of pilot school teachers, although it is at the same time time-demanding and with personal sacrifice. According to teachers' opinions it is understood as a priority strengthened by the absence of secondary school textbooks. But also in the Phare VET project they face economic data, time demand and complex procedures when evaluating the "needs" of other schools according to the minimum necessary number of copies.

2.1.2 CHANGES IN THE FORM AND METHOD OF TEACHING

The most specific feature of the traditional school has been the simple mediation of knowledge in a ready form. The mentioned approach gives only limited chance for the developing pupils' independent thinking, search for variation procedures etc. If there has been a change in the orientation of pilot schools from the content of teaching to outputs in the process of teaching, it has thus enabled changes in the teachers' approach towards teaching, towards changes in the forms and methods of teaching. In the Phare Programme the teachers try to use activation methods, especially project methods and the teaching of problem solving.

However, the effort to develop pupils' active thinking by the teaching of problem solving puts great pressure on the work of the teaching staff. Pupil projects, short-term and long-term, that are especially in higher forms considered to be very important, usually reach their height at pilot schools in the project week at the end of each grading period.

Both the process of formulating the problem of the pupil's project, its preparation, and the process of its management is highly demanding for the teacher. The pupils should be led by their teachers to formulate a hypothesis and to search for different solutions. It has been shown that secondary school pupils are not ready for such work and teachers often make a lot of effort to find not only the principles and strategies in the dialogue with their pupils and how to solve problems, but also their different solutions.

When incorporating key skills into the subject matter of individual subjects the pilot school teachers have better results using team co-operation in solving problems than mass direct teaching and some non-traditional forms and methods, such as role play, language games and public appearance. Although skills are included in school curriculum at all pilot schools, they have not been worked out to the more demanding methodological principles everywhere

The impact in teaching is thus moved away from the traditional transitive teaching towards activated teaching, partnership, which is one of the main requirements of the Phare VET project. However, for most teachers these are non-traditional and new approaches that they have never practically implemented on a large scale until now, although theoretically they know them very well but they should be prepared for them in time and in an adequate way.

2.1.3 THE APPROACH TOWARDS PUPILS AND THEIR EVALUATION

The effort to humanise education, the orientation on the student, the respect of his/her individuality, the change in the approach towards him/her are the most important changes in the organisation of teaching at pilot schools. Module teaching is a chance for pupils and teachers to change the understanding of teaching. To move from verbal and object teaching to co-operative teaching with output requirements which were defined before. The freedom of methods and forms of teaching enable the pupils and the teachers to use their creativity. The way of implementing the curriculum depends on the type of secondary school but in general it can be said that there is a shift from attention to knowledge and output to the field of skills, habits and attitudes.

A significant feature of the approach to newly understood evaluation in the pilot school project is the tendency to move from quantitative, directive evaluation, comparison of pupils to the approach of diagnostic, qualitative evaluation. The main function of evaluation is thus the diagnostic and informational function – where and why the pupil has problems. Also the aspect of self-evaluation is important.

As the indicators show, it is only a theoretical proposal but the possibility of pilot schools to go "beyond" the legislation is missing.

The various forms of evaluation that are recommended for module teaching which are usually a part of the individual modules (besides classic evaluation in the form of a grading scale, it is also in the form of points, oral evaluation and credits etc.) are demanding for teachers that are used to traditional evaluation. It is because the necessity of rules saying that they should be transformed into the classic grade report. Besides this, some proposals from pilot schools for double evaluation exist – apart from classic and oral evaluation. The teachers at pilot schools consider as the most useful way of evaluating key skills of the pupils to be by complex oral evaluation and complex evaluation of the pupils work in his/her project.

The changes in the approach to teaching should reflect all requirements of the Phare project of which some have been briefly mentioned. However, because of the extent of this project, its exacting character and insufficient time definition they are, according to the teachers, concerned with important questions, conceptual changes and in a lesser manner with a view at the "micro" level of individual schools. The difference in the levels of approach of the individual pilot schools is quite large and it is mostly influenced by the qualities of people who implement the programme. Their work at every single pilot school is always visible and they become the driving force of actions at their schools.

2.2 Material conditions

As facilities and material equipment at pilot schools are concerned – which can also help a lot or, on the other hand, can embitter the work of teachers – they were at the very beginning of the experiment on a very good level because this was one of the criteria with which the schools were chosen.

For the realisation of the new school curriculum it was necessary to further equip the laboratories and classrooms for information technologies behind which stands the high sacrifice of the teaching and managerial staff of pilot schools from which often arises the uncalled-for envy of non-pilot schools. The pilot school teachers must face these kinds of opinions and the performance of their demanding work must not be disturbed by them.

2.3 The workload of teachers

As it is obvious form the previous facts, the workload of teachers at pilot schools who started to use the module content of teaching is much higher than that at other schools. Although the Research Institute of Vocational Education worked up "The Vocational Education Curriculum and Possibilities of Its Module Organisation" which includes theoretical ways out and some methodological guides, the preparation of modules means a big workload for teachers. First, they have to understand the importance and theoretical ways out, they have to accept the suggested methodology, study the basic curriculum with already set standards etc. Also teaching with the use of educational modules is "new" and demands a different approach for the teacher towards the organisation of teaching that is different than the one he has been used to. Above all, the teacher has to make new teaching materials and workbooks.

From the point of view of the teacher's workload, so called direct teaching hours, it can be said that by valid legislation it is "pulled down" to the limits of law. This, however, brings certain constraints in the realisation of the school curriculum at pilot schools, and the need for keeping the legislative framework of the school curriculum without the possibility of exceeding it. In praxis it means that it would not be possible to keep the regular weekly workload of teachers at the required level when implementing the multi-subject modules because teaching using modules has a different character from the point of view of the school's timetable. The present legal norms prescribe a maximum of 8 over-time lessons per teacher per week. That is why it is necessary to "moderate" the module subject matter to the position of subject teaching modules. In spite of these constraints the module teaching is useful for the teacher as well as for further development.

Besides mentioned work-loads pilot school teachers must also adjust to the fact that the group of pupils coming to the first year is very non-homogenous as far as their abilities, dispositions and interests are concerned. It is a kind of a "tax" paid for the fulfilment of the concept of a united first year and the possibilities to move the pupil's decision about his/her educational path one year forward. In spite of the fact that this is a big burden, the teachers consider the mentioned conceptual decisions as correct and they are mostly willing to pay this tax for the benefit of the pupil.

Because of the high demands of the whole experiment and namely the new concept of teaching mostly experienced teachers were introduced to the project at pilot schools, head teachers, or sometimes the heads of subject groups and committees. However, at present along with the broadening of the content of the project and realisation of further forms, all pilot school teachers are more or less included in the project.

During the last period a certain group of teachers has been over-loaded. It is due to the fact that they have wanted to fulfil all of the above mentioned objectives of this experiment so they introduced a wide initiative for creating a partnership with schools in EU countries and they are concentrating on the possibility of continuing as a follow-up under the LEONARDO Programme.

3. PILOT SCHOOLS TEACHING STAFF TRAINING

If the reform of the vocational education and training system should be successful, it is necessary to get everybody who would run the reform and train them for the changed situation in advance because there would be a lot of pressure put on them and a large amount of professional and human work-load. Besides a number of material, organisational etc. matters, this reform also requires an adequate level of teaching staff training.

The first year of pilot school teachers training within the framework of the Phare Programme was conceptually based on the conclusions and recommendations of the Strategic Review. The guarantee of this training was the Department of Technical Education and Vocational Training at the Faculty of Education, Charles University, Prague. The emphasis was on the preparation, design and evaluation of newly made curricula, with the accent on the development of basic skills, larger adaptability of secondary technical school leavers on the labour market and at the same time also the education of personality which is creative and qualified to solve the problems in the future career and in private life.
In line with the tasks mentioned above, the aim of training was set. Selected pilot school teachers should have taken part in this training. The training should help them to find the orientation and motivation to realise the experiment and it should prepare them in the system of vocational seminars for the new concept of teaching in the first year at pilot schools.

3.1 The content of in-service training

The content and organisational specialisation of vocational seminars was, in the first part of the training, based on the approved project and it was thematically divided into four blocks. The introduction block was created in the form of an information seminar, based on the basic principles of The Strategic Review of Vocational Education and Training, its application at pilot schools, the position and role of pilot schools, approaches towards training in the field of general education and observed ways of vocational training at pilot schools and was based on the experience gained from the evaluation of educational programmes at pilot schools.

The second, third and fourth block respected the ways of vocational training. The content and extent was dynamically adjusted according to the needs of pilot schools. The second block was specialised on projecting teaching programmes and their comparisons with the projects run abroad, on the steps of the school curriculum design for the 2nd and higher years of pilot schools, on the module system and key skills in the school curriculum. The following block consisted of the new approach to the teaching and learning of pupils under the conditions of evaluating the new pilot schools' curricula.

In the last block, diagnostic and grading methods and their use according to new curricula and methodological tests in the evaluation of teaching results were presented here.

The present training is based more on the teaching and training, which help teachers and managerial staff to teach – above all – the planning and realisation of the innovative projects in their own schools under the vocational guidance of experienced lectors.

However, in this stage, as the results of empirical research done at all 19 pilot schools show, the trainees are disappointed by the highly academic orientation of their training which is according to their opinions far away from the real situation at their schools. They highly appreciate that foreign lectors teach them how to think in a different way than they have been used to and to look at education from a new, different angle. Their further complaints consider the fact that the training is very strongly influenced by the unequal positions of Czech and foreign lectors. This means that Czech lectors are being attacked that they do not try to influence the content, organisation and the operation of the educational activities although they know much about both the opinions of pilot school teachers and their needs.

A large number of interviewed teachers had some doubts about the effectiveness of spent means on their training. It seemed to them that it was very expensive not only from the financial point of view but also from the point of view of time. At the same time it is unambiguous that the field of training was one of the fields that were highly influenced by the total inconsistency of the level and the ways of management of the whole Phare VET project.

3.2 Organisation of in-service training

In the beginning of the training teachers of general subjects, teachers of vocational subjects, vocational training masters from all pilot schools took part. They were all those who taught the first year.

The selection of participants in this training was often based on the interest in individual topics of the particular training block (sometimes it was also due to the organisational possibilities of the school which prioritised teaching at the school) and not on interests in the whole system of training. When evaluating the organisation of training this approach was said to be the least suitable because the continuity of a large number of topics was disturbed in a crucial way. Many participants lost their interest in it, others were interested in explaining the topic that had been discussed in the previous block etc.

The seminars lasted one-day and took place at four training institutions (in Prague, Sezimovo, Ústí, Brno and Valašské Mezi_í_í). The morning seminars were attended by all participants, the afternoon sessions were performed in special sections according to the professional specialisation of individual participants. The programme in sections had the character of a discussion and participants were motivated to take an active part in the work (discussion about curricula, pupil evaluation etc.). The participants of these courses had the opportunity to show their opinions and remarks, to change their professional experience under the new conditions and to acquire inspiration for their further activities.

The framework of the programme of all four blocks of seminars was concretised according to the needs of the participants. During the first block the participants were given a questionnaire where teachers wrote their opinions not only about the work with the new curricula (their advantages, problems with realisation of the new approach etc.) but they particularly voiced their opinions about the content of further blocks of seminars from the point of view of helping to realise the new approach. In the questionnaire they were also asked to explain their views on the organisation of the seminars, on the work in the special sections, on organising visits to vocational schools abroad, etc.

Based on the results of the questionnaire research the content of individual blocks, designing special sections according to regions were further developed and the time schedule of individual blocks was adjusted to fit the organisation of the school year and the possibility of commuting to the individual training centres.

The individual thematically based blocks of seminars were arranged by special lectors. The seminars were given by teachers of the Faculty of Education, Charles University, Prague and Masaryk University, Brno, special workers of the Research Institute of Vocational Education in Prague and Czech MOE.

Based on the remarks from the individual schools made on the level and content of teacher training, a new work group was formed. It began to co-ordinate the further training cycles of pilot schools in June 1995. Although the programme of the group and educational activities were set, but in the year 1995/96 a big delay of deadlines of individual training activities took place and some were moved into the next period. While the training for teacher of general subjects was cut by a great deal, it was reduced only a little for teachers of vocational subjects. The planned seminar for teachers - Foreign trends, comparison of syllabuses and objectives and activity based methods - was not organised. Also the planned two-day seminars on project teaching were not carried out.

At the end of September 1995 a meeting of the commission for education took place, attended by the Danish expert Karsten. He was also introduced to the plan of further actions in the pilot school teacher training but also to the unsatisfactory situation in the training: big time delays (the whole six months the commission had waited for the approval of the work plan by the PMU!), non-clarity in the financial means for its implementation etc. The result was the proposal for the preferential organisation of two thematic in-service training seminars: evaluation of the results of pupils' and teachers' work and project teaching. However, the mentioned seminars have not yet been organised!

Only the change in the Prague PMU Phare VET and an active approach in the long run of the consultant, Mrs. Kirsten Tejsner, brought radical changes in the planning and organisation of teacher training.

According to the Operational Plan of Activities which includes a time schedule for 1996 tenders were set in January and in April contracts should have been signed. The beginning of training was planned for June 1996 but because of a slight delay it actually started in the 1996/97school year. Only after the end of the whole cycle will it be seen whether the deficit in the pilot school teachers training was eliminated albeit very late.

Again, the needs of the in-service education of masters and teachers at individual pilot schools were analysed and their reviews were written. In March 1996 applications for training cycles for 1996 were sent to the work committee. Cycles that is in progress now include the training of:

a) teachers of foreign languages – for 30 teachers of German and 38 teachers of English.

Participants take part in a one-week course and three two-day seminars in the Czech Republic and a two-week study trip abroad.

b) workshop teachers, vocational training masters, head masters – 69 practical subjects teachers

c) teachers in new methods of teaching – for 56 teachers of theoretical subjects (humanities and science)

d) pilot school managerial staff – for 57 members of the managerial staff: headmasters and his/her two deputies from all 19 pilot schools

At pilot schools, foreign languages (German and English) are being taught mostly by re-qualified teachers of Russian who strongly feel their own methodological inefficiency when teaching. Based on the wishes of these teachers intensive residence methodological courses have been organised by the Goethe Institut in Prag, the British Council and the Centre for teacher re-qualifications at Masaryk University, Brno. These courses have shown to be very effective. The level of methodological lectures, the communicative skills training with participants, the problems of using modern teaching aids and provision of a number of methodological materials for the participants was very much appreciated by all of them.

The training of teachers and vocational training masters of different subjects and specialisation is scheduled to take place from October 1996 to June 1997. Participants will take part in five two-day seminars and a week study trip abroad. The training is organised by Berufliche Fortbildungszentren der Bayerischen Arbeitgewerbeverbände (The Centres for In-service Training for Bavarian Craft Unions) and the Faculty of Education, Charles University.

Besides the above mentioned educational activities some other activities are being organised They were chosen by each pilot school individually according to its own needs. The selection and specialisation of the course for teachers was done on the basis of selection.

In line with the approved project of the first part of pilot school teacher training, some visits to foreign vocational schools have been arranged at the end of this part. The visits were selected in a way that the situation in the countries would be in line with the situation in Czech schools. Their selection was carried out in co-operation with the Austrian Ministry of Education and Culture, with partner schools in the Netherlands and with the Bavarian Industrial Chamber, Germany. The visits abroad were focused on problems that are being faced at Czech pilot schools: the concept of widely designed study programmes, profiles of leavers of different kinds and types of vocational schools, the concept and design of curricula, implementation of teaching methods and forms that aid the activation of students, evaluation of pupils, placement of leavers of vocational schools into praxis and in further studies, final and leaving exams, material equipment of schools, vocational training of pupils, co-operation with companies, financing of schools, school management. Participants had the opportunity to talk to the management of schools and to the teachers, observe lessons of vocational theory and vocational praxis which was highly appreciated by everyone.

During May and June 1996, a total of nine visits were made abroad, from which six were to Austria, two to the Netherlands and one to Germany. During each foreign visit at least two vocational schools were visited (one similar to our secondary vocational school and one similar to our secondary technical school). A total of 317 people from all 19 pilot schools took part in the visits.

In spite of the mentioned activities it can be said that the original intention was not fulfilled: in advance, a step by step and systematic introduction of individual groups of pilot schools teaching staff to the problems and supply them with information that could be successfully used under new conditions and possibly handed to other schools that would decide to implement similar changes.

4. DISCUSSION ABOUT THE STRATEGIC REVIEW PROPOSALS

In 1992 the Strategic Review brought a number of suggestions for vocational education reform including proposals for changes in the training of teaching staff. It can be said that the drawn conclusions in spite of the five year gap are almost all up-to-date even today. One can not only agree with them but most of them can be taken on word for word in 1997. Unlike other fields where a lot of changes have happened the teacher training and especially their in-service training – and particularly teachers of vocational subjects – is from different points of view the same as in 1992.

Also the teachers who are responsible for the training of new teachers did not change in the previous period. They are usually subject specialists and they usually know only little about the schools for which they prepare their students. The younger teachers do not stop spending most of the time studying theory that should help them to get a higher degree in their subject because without it is impossible to advance further professionally.

Similar as in the case of the OECD Review (conclusions will be discussed later) the Strategic Review points out a great professional concern of teachers and their high standard of theoretical competence. According to the Strategic Review the negative aspects that have survived until today are the following:

q there are no national objective standards of competence in pre-service teacher training
q teaching, not learning is the main focus of training
q no research has been carried out into the existing teacher competencies in secondary technical schools
q the needs of the labour market do not influence the system of training. Supply and demand factors do not affect the provision of pre-service training
q the narrow professional role of teachers, masters and instructors produced by the system of training inhibits changes and development. There is no formal professional training for instructors
q teachers who train future teachers have little work experience in secondary technical schools, and in the occupation they are training their students for
q although higher education institutions that train future teachers should also organise the in-service training it is done only rarely. Thus, the teaching staff of these schools has only a small practical involvement with practising teachers
q the market economy has little influence on the competencies of today's teachers and instructors including those in the pre-service training

4.1 Possible changes in the training of educators

The main principle of any education development programme corresponds to the Strategic Review curriculum driven change of the development of teachers. The first step is to develop a system of teacher and instructor education and training which is based on national standards. These standard should ensure:

- relevant subject knowledge and experience
- structured teaching experience and conceptual development based on applied educational research
- that the professional values and attitudes that the schools require are specific in objective terms

However, the system of education and training of teachers and instructors based on national standards is at present too hypothetical for schools. The labour market is becoming very dynamic in its development and secondary technical schools must follow this trend. That is why it is impossible to wait for the standards to be created in the centre. In co-operation with social partners, pragmatic output standards are formed in accordance with the centrally required outputs. Schools welcome the efforts to make curriculum models. These become one of the leading aspects of planning in-service teacher training.

The model of the teacher on which such courses are based is normally described as an "extended professional" who could:

- teach broad-based subjects effectively to pupils of various abilities, background and aspirations
- see the place of their subjects in relation to the whole curriculum of the school and its cultural and social context
- appreciate the part that the subjects play in the economic and cultural life of the society
- recognise and respond to the role of the teacher in relation to the general organisation of the school, and in particular to the "pastoral care" of its pupils
- work as a questioning, analytical and reflective person who can make informed choices, decisions and judgements about educational issues and problems

The support in the field of secondary vocational education should be strengthened by the following changes in pre-service teacher training:

- modernising the system of accreditation of courses to ensure that the interests of employers and schools are fully involved
- requiring the necessary competencies of the staff of Faculties of Education and Departments of Education of technical higher institutions, e. g. relevant, recent school and research experience
- identifying the competencies required by the staff of these secondary technical schools to develop the necessary curriculum changes, initially based on selected pilot schools,

as part of the development of national standards
- increasing the amount of teaching praxis and starting it earlier in the course so that students can relate studies to the needs of the classroom
- developing an applied educational research programme to strengthen links with schools and enterprises

4.2 The accreditation and funding of teacher education

One of the recommendations that have not been reacted to yet and that is worth further discussion is the establishment of a National Accreditation and Funding Council for Teacher Education. The establishment of this Council would, according to the Strategic Review, begin only after the definition of agreed national occupational standards. The mentioned Council:

- should be established under the Law governing Higher Education and should present an Annual Report on its activities to Parliament
- its members should be appointed by the Minister responsible for Higher Education on the advice of relevant authorities. The nominations should come from the Rectors of Universities and Higher Schools, Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Headmasters of Schools.
- the Council should represent the interests of employers, the universities and higher schools, and the headmasters of schools

The Strategic Review recommends that the Council should develop the national competence for teachers and instructors in secondary vocational education that will be approved by national post-gradate awards and will set the guidelines and criteria that will correspond to the system of pre- and in-service teacher training.

In-service teacher training for improving the necessary competencies of teachers and instructors forms an important component of a high quality educational system. Identification of the usefulness of such education should be based on the system of performance-based appraisal of the school and its staff.

The criteria for funding in-service education and training should ensure that an effective and efficient provision should be available locally and encourage co-operative activities to meet the needs of the local economy. For example, this provision may be made by a local consortium of employers, university or higher school, and secondary technical schools.

Unlike the conclusions of the Strategic Review it is almost obvious that not only universities and higher schools but also higher professional schools and some secondary schools (e. g. some pilot schools) that have suitable staff could help organise in-service training. Particularly the service of the best Phare pilot school teachers would be a good idea. Activities of in-service training that would be organised by these institutions could serve as an important factor in acquiring more funds.

Close co-operation should be established between the Departments of Education of individual higher schools and secondary technical schools which could lead to the provision of a curriculum of high quality. The financing could be provided to the "practising school" which cold again be pilots schools which have newly expanded their curriculum.

It is certain that there is a number of effective approaches towards in-service teacher training but none of them is universal. The schools have different starting positions that are determined not only by material factors (such as the location of the school and its sources) but also by the aims that it sets and the style of its management. But no matter what the school chooses it should always respect the main requirement of the reform which probably is the flexible structure of curriculum and which includes the identification of paths for improvement. It is necessary for the experience gained from school curriculum development that it influence also pre-service teacher training. An important role in the whole process should be played by independent inspection that would monitor changes and conduct evaluation.

5. OECD REVIEWS OF NATIONAL POLICIES IN EDUCATION: THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The OECD Review includes deep analysis of the situation in vocational education and it brings a number of suggestions for its reform. It touches very briefly the problems of teachers and their situation although not specifically vocational education teachers.

The Review states that the quality of our teacher training is comparable to other OECD countries, however, investments into the quality of teachers are not sufficient enough to ensure that the teachers have the skills, motivation and qualification for adjusting the process of education to the transforming economy and society. That is why the Review states as a key feature in increasing the quality of teachers the reform of their in-service training. The team of examiners determined that reform of this field should be considered as a priority from the following points of view:

q the changed situation of schools as their autonomy and variability needs and interests, economy and society is concerned
q meeting different individual needs of teachers and developing their sense for wider professional accountability can increase the attractiveness of the teaching profession
q reforms of in-service training can be signs of implementing new profiles of teaching careers and differentiated salaries

However, according to the examiners' opinions it is necessary to find a place for in-service training within the plans for the development of school that will include both the priority aims of the school and wider professional accountability.

Due to the mentioned opinions the examiners formulated Recommendation No. 10: Linking in-service teacher training to school development and strengthened careers in teaching.

If the quality of teachers should be higher, according to the examiners it is necessary to work out strategies for the development of teacher policy within the complete development of the system of education. This strategy can be successful only if MOE makes a unified decision that teachers have real key role and ensures that the suggested measures considering teachers (their salaries, professional growth, admission, pre- and in-service training) are inter-related.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the beginning of this part it is necessary to mention that a number of issues reflected in the evaluated fields is of general character. They emerge from circumstances that come together with the implementation of the whole pilot school project and they are closely connected to the overall situation of Czech in-service training.

6.1 The training of future vocational school teaching staff

The tasks set by the Strategic Review 10 years ago are up-to-date: national standard competencies for pre-service training, the small influence of the labour market on the system of this training, the establishment of National Accreditation and Funding Council for Teacher Education and Training etc. (see Chapter 4).

In this part of the Report we will only mention those problems that must be dealt immediately. The teachers of secondary technical schools including both general and vocational subjects and also vocational training. The teaching of the first two categories of subjects is provided by teachers who have a higher technical education and who received their pedagogical qualification either parallel to their vocational studies or finished it thereafter. Somewhat different is the situation of teachers of vocational subjects at secondary vocational schools or possibly in those vocational courses where the necessary technical higher education does not exist and, thus, teachers cannot get the full qualification. It is the situation in the field of trade and services: cooks, waiters, dressmakers, hairdressers, etc. A number of teachers of these courses has done a six-semester additional study of vocational subjects and they have competed their Bachelor's degree in the teaching of vocational subjects. Both groups of teachers have become – on the basis of MOE decree (April 1994) – unqualified because they have not complied with the requirement of a complete university degree.

The vocational training that forms 50% of vocational education is provided by masters, workshop teachers the majority of whom have only got a secondary vocational education completed with a maturita exam. For masters an additional education course is required but it surely cannot be said that this requirement is fully respected. Some technically demanding courses require that the post of master be held by a university-educated person but this does not bring a solution to the problem of salaries. It would be therefore suitable to establish the category of workshop teacher that would enable the employment of university-educated people for some courses and it would in a certain way include them in the table of salaries.

As for instructors – they are usually only trained in their field. Although the present regulations require at least a so called pedagogical minimum this requirement is being only rarely fulfilled. For instructors who did not pass the maturita exam there is not any agreed structure of professional training. The teaching is therefore done by workers who have perfectly mastered their craft but they often only train their students in the craft or trade activities. Thus, their basic pedagogical, methodological and psychological education is insufficient.

The present classification of occupations includes under teaching staff – apart from teachers – only masters and educators. On the basis of gained experience it is necessary to refresh the definition of teaching staff not only from the point of view of attained education but also with respect to performed and required activities in relation to the pupil.

The definition of the teaching staff cannot be generally interchangeable with the definition of the teacher. More clear seems to be the classification that emphasises the position of the teacher compared to other teaching staff members. Thus, teaching staff members can be even those who have not attained a university degree but rather a vocational qualification – e. g. educators who have finished secondary pedagogical school, or masters – secondary technical school, or secondary vocational school and follow-up educational studies, instructors – secondary vocational school and pedagogical minimum.

The status of a teaching staff member is connected with the Labour Code (e. g. workload, the length of holiday). However, the present state disadvantages teaching staff members against teachers.

The solution of mentioned categories of staff members of secondary technical schools with their educational training and, thus, their educational qualification requires a concept that will make use of the deep analysis of certain issues with members of all parties concerned and that will cure the mentioned situation also from the point of view of legislation. It is therefore necessary to newly define the meaning of the word teacher and teaching staff member and to draw out what activities and under what circumstances the holders of Bachelor's or Master's degrees work. At the same time it is necessary not to forget that vocational education forms an important part of the system of education and that is why its workers should not be a part of a separate system.

Teacher training must at the period of training and also at the time of teaching reflect the fact that the aim of vocational education and training is a flexible, multi-qualified leaver suitable for changing technologies and fields. And as the dynamic demand of the labour market is increasing, the dynamics of teacher training must also increase. However, until now there has not been a system of teacher training in the Czech Republic that would react to the above mentioned needs. Vocational schools began to stay behind the enterprises in a great manner.

6.2 In-service vocational education staff training

Generally, it can be said that although in all important conceptual materials about the transformation of education in the Czech Republic we can find a proclamation regarding the irreplaceable role of teachers who by their activity, invention and their willingness to sacrifice a part of their free time and comfort, the issue of human resource development stands aside. One of the evidence of this situation can be the state of in-service training. There is a lack of concept of in-service teaching staff training, a MOE decree of in-service teacher training, the unity of qualification growth with the table of salaries but also the network of workplaces and specialists who would ensure it. The absence of a mentioned decree can show the effort of the centre to avoid the solving of this problem due to different reasons. The reasons can be not only economic problems but also a non-systemic approach and underestimation of this feature of the system. The salary order with its tables, tariffs and levels are in line with the central government of the previous system.

It would be good for MOE to re-evaluate the importance of in-service teacher training for further development of the system of education and to take up systemic and decisive measures including funding. In-service teacher training must be conceptually based, professionally led, it must bring a number of interesting and up-to-date courses and it is especially necessary that the school has:

a) physical space – freeing the active teachers for the price of decreasing the level of teaching
b) sufficient financial funds – at present significant funds for in-service training do not bring the needed effect

Although the implementation of the system of aimed financing of the teacher and instructor training has shifted the control over the financing to the school competence and it has enabled the financing of training and education for the school's own employees, its implementation brings some problems:

q the financial support is not sufficient according to the real needs that arise from the transformation of secondary technical schools
q centres that offer accreditation educational courses must pay off and this results in high prices of the courses which narrows the group of people whose school can provide such education

Thus, the competence of schools in this field exists but their management is limited not only financially, but also organisational possibilities of their school because of the majority of in-service training is carried out during the school year and thus it is the time of the full teaching.

It would be desirable that MOE would work up a system of aimed financing of in-service teacher training that would correspond to the real extent of school transformation. A part of the funds should finance directly the centres that provide accreditation training with the possibility of controlling the prices of the courses.

Although faculties of education, educational centres and private educational authorities organise a number of seminars and courses for general subject teachers - in-service vocational subjects teacher training has not been completed and in the whole range provided by anyone and no educational authority including MOE monitors evaluates this particular field. It would be therefore suitable when designing the system of in-service vocational subjects teacher training to deeply analyse the system that was here in the previous period (until 1994) including activities of the so called professional groups of which there was a whole row (machine industry, building industry, trade and services, textile etc.). Vocational study trips of vocational teaching staff could become a new form. The visits could be to similarly specialised schools, research institutes or field corresponding enterprises, work places. At the same time it would be desirable to think about this system in a relation to the "Teacher" Programme.

When looking for ways leading to a more effective support system a question of how it would be possible to force professional higher or higher schools, faculties of education and the university itself to a greater commitment in the relation to research of the school issues and in-service teacher training on one hand and on the other hand representatives of those who employ the future leavers to be more interested in their training and the quality of teachers providing it. It is mostly a matter of strengthening the innovative capacity of schools and teachers. All mentioned institutions could - in close co-operation with schools - bring new vocational findings but it could also be a welcome enrichment of professional development on both sides.

As the content issues in the system of education and in-service teacher training are concerned it would be desirable to concentrate on more complex oriented teachers and their flexibility towards the changing requirements for the content and structure of vocational education and training but it is necessary that the part of in-service teacher training include tasks connected with the new approach to education and the school itself. However, most teachers need to know this new philosophy, get acquainted with it and only then they can continue further education or vocational training. The mentioned key moment for successful implementation of changes is not only at schools but also in educational centres strongly underestimated. Thus, in-service training must become a part of the further development of the school with the aim of bringing new concepts and thinking to praxis.

We can expect that the development will bring new types of means, implementation of new educational technologies, teaching with the support of PC's, long-distance education etc. The requirement on the change of the school's function have not been in relevant relation with teacher training. The traditional understanding of schools and teaching still prevails and only frequently new in-service teacher training does not concentrate on such issues.

At present a particularly big danger to the teaching at secondary schools and secondary technical schools is the lack of suitable textbooks. The MOE initiative completely put aside the possibility of working with the books supplied at the school and the provision of textbooks and other teaching materials is left to the teacher and the student. This illusory freedom leads to the fact that secondary technical school teachers are forced to make their own texts, textbooks, workbooks, tests etc. Along with all positive points that can be found here (the freedom of teacher, erudition, direct interest, individualisationĽ) a serious problem has emerged. It concerns pre-service teacher training because teachers are not sufficiently prepared for doing these things.

In-service teacher training lacks such features of education that are concerned with preparation, processing and design of curricular documents, e. g. their own studying texts, textbooks, workbooks, tests. this problem requires a completely new qualification of the teacher he/she was not adequately trained for. That is why the budgets of the Czech MOE should contain, along with the strongly financial cuts for textbooks, some new items for the activation of teacher training in this field. So far, such materials are being produced only with the help of intuition of experienced members of teaching staff with no small time and financial costs of their schools. Pilot school teachers have been in a better position but because it considers only 19 schools out of 1568 it is necessary to find its solution fast.

School management always plays a key role in forming a school's work team and for future training and realisation of the programme for personal development of the school's staff. The experience show that a small number of present heads and deputy heads of secondary technical schools have gone through quality managerial courses and have used modern means of strategy and management at their schools. In relation to the personal development of teachers the personal potential of erudite teachers who understand their profession as a mission is being seldom used.

Should the in-service education and training be a priority because it influences the quality of the whole system of education it is therefore necessary to have good knowledge of the situation at individual schools. The identification of the necessity of such training could be based on a system of assessment of the results of the school's and its teaching staff's activities. However, at present educational authorities are in their present position only a "mediator" of distribution of financial funds for schools' activities with a great effort to be objective as it can be but unfortunately with minimum information about all activities of these schools. This leads to the "socialist" re-distribution of funds to schools that all get equal funds which is in contrast with the proclaimed system of assessment and support of schools based on their results.

However, during the discussion about in-service training one must not forget that the need for further education must come from the teacher who is him-/herself interested and willing, in spite of problems coming usually from the centre, to find his/her own ways towards increasing his/her pedagogical and vocational qualification.

Due to the highly demanding training of technical and vocational subjects teaching staff the MOE should initiate the production of common projects of in-service training of both technical higher schools (the guarantee of theoretical standards) and secondary technical school, e. g. centre for vocational training (the guarantee of vocational standards and organisation). In this respect there is the possibility of accelerating and finishing the training of sufficient number of pilot school teachers who would together with other specialists participate in the preparation of accreditation courses for training of teachers in fields connected with the transformation of the Czech school. The approved projects should get the requisite financial funds in time. From the position of the centre only those actions should be taken that will+ help the modernisation of the system of accreditation and accreditation centres, and as the case may be of other systems of fully-valued in-service education of teachers.

At all levels the approach to in-service teacher training should be more active, public discussions should be raised and the proposed positive changes should be implemented fast. The vital concept of in-service teacher training should be pushed through more strongly and non-constructive discussions should not be given much space.

MANAGEMENT

František BACÍK

Helena KUBÁTOVÁ
Milena MICHALÍKOVÁ
Jirí SVOBODA
Evgen TOMÍŠEK
Marta _MOLÍKOVÁ

INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of the management and administration has been – in democratic countries – already considered for many years as an key factor for increasing the efficiency and influence of the education generally and in particular vocational training. The level of the management and managers is appreciated as an important condition of the efficiency of the organisations not only in the sphere of the enterprises but also in the area of professional preparation – in vocational education. Therefore this problem area has become an important aspect in the determination of the hitherto results of the experiment with 19 pilot schools in the framework of the programme Evaluation Phare VET and in the generalisation of their experience in this area regards the requirements in the changes also in the other establishments of vocational education.

During the survey we set out from the basic strategic materials, especially from the Strategic Study of Vocational Education and Training (1993), from material from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Training (hereafter to be referred to as ME) "Quality and responsibility" (1994) and from the report on the national policy of the Czech Republic (hereafter: CR) for the OECD (1996). Other conception studies have been also utilised – among others the study by F. Bacík "The questions of school management in the European context" (Bacík 1997).

After the investigation of the mentioned materials a group working plan was elaborated on, which abandoned the problems of control solved by other working groups (especially finance, legislative and evaluation). The plan concentrated on the collection of inevitable information for the answers to the following questions:

1. How the changes in the contents and organisation of the education in the pilot schools have projected in the system of management and administration of those schools? And also on the contrary.

2. What influence have the differences in the approach, contents and quality of the management and administration in the individual schools on the quality of the concept and implementation of the transformation process, as far as the contents and organisation of education are concerned.

3. What changes (up-to date, prospective) in the system of management and administration of the schools and educational system are advisable for preparation, what tools and mechanisms of the management and administration are to be innovated for ensuring the efficiency and influence of functioning and further development of the system of vocational education in the CR?

During the research standard methods have been employed – visitation at the schools and observance of their operations, investigation of their documentation, questionnaire inquiry and controlled interviews with the headmasters of schools, their deputies and the representatives of the teachers and students.

The interviews have been carried out and the opinions of functionaries from the School Offices (hereafter: SO), Czech School Inspectorate (hereafter: CSI) and from the ME have been investigated. The authors of the report set out also from the knowledge and experience acquired from the interviews with the heads of the establishments of vocational training, that have not been included in the Phare VET programme, and from the data collected during the preparation of the draft of the National Report on the State of Education in the CR (Reports 1996).

The following report which evaluates the experience of the pilot schools and discusses the proposals enclosed in the Strategic Sstudy and the documents for OECD, is distributed – besides the Introduction – into four parts and annexes. The first one is concerned with the relationship between the changes in the contents and organisation of the vocational education, and their influence and consequences for the management and administration of the observed schools. The second part is devoted to the questions of the conception and approach to the pedagogical concept and the activities of the pilot schools. The third part of the report informs about the knowledge from the exploration of the efficiency of the management and administration at all levels of conduct. The fourth part is constituted from the conclusions and recommendations.

Before we start to devote ourselves to the aforementioned parts, we will announce two comments. First, to suggest that such an extensive and complex problem area, which is here empirically nearly non-mapable, cannot govern in the given time by quite objective methods and in all their comprehensiveness. Second, in the conformity with the goal of the report and the designated extent it was necessary to limit some positive evaluations. On the contrary, we underline some limits and problems, this even when they concern only parts of the schools and monitoring, meanwhile, not always sufficiently expressive trends.

1. INFLUENCE OF THE CHANGES IN THE CONTENTS AND ORGANISATION OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ON ITS MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

(Basic documents for the area of vocational education and their application as concerns the management of the schools and the system of education)

1.1 Documents and their implementation

Hitherto materials are analysed in detail in the background study by H. Kubátová. They relate to the vocational education in the framework of the programmes Phare VET, Phare RES, materials for OECD and documents ME "Quality and Responsibility" (cf. the bibliography), this from the standpoint of the conclusions and recommendations relevant for the management and administration of the schools and the system of education. Generally it can be said that the mentioned documents and the suggestions of their authors pointed partly to the internal management and administration of the schools, partly to the external management at the level of the centre and the regions. The documents as regards the contents concerned the goals and concept, strategic orientation, organisational structures as well as the principles and methods applied on all levels of the management. The main motivation was the effort to democratise the management of vocational education and the increasing of its efficiency.

It can be said that some of these conclusions and recommendations have been already implemented. First of all, the management and administration of vocational education have been for the great part transferred under one centre - ME. Significant development has occurred in the autonomy of the vocational schools facilitating to remove the former uniformity, to diversify the educational offer and to expand, as far as possible, the plurality of the educational programmes, forms and methods of the pedagogical work of schools. It can be said that in no segment of the educational system of the CR has arisen after the year 1989 such a boom of new educational institutions and such an abundance of new different forms as in vocational education.

Also in no segment of the education has occurred such expressive and successful adaptation of the management of the schools (non-state but also state) to the new conditions created by the application of market principles as in vocational education. Empirically it can prove the definite elements of the successful enterprising approach in the area of marketing and educational offer, acquire additional (sponsor) finance resources, personnel policy etc. However, enterprising oriented subjects are interested in the contents questions, especially in the continuity with the changes of the programme and the orientation of schools that should raise the attraction of the educational offer.

However, the open problem, particularly on the levels of the management and administration, remains the questions of goals, concept and strategy. The paradox is that in these questions some schools are showing a certain positive shift. As far as the organisation structures are concerned, it remains the not-yet solved question of the regional authorities whose absence is sensibly touching in many ways, first of all, vocational education. This gap cannot compensate even the prepared National Council for Education (whose establishment was recommended by the mentioned documents including the report of the experts for OECD). Democratisation of management in the horizontal level has been so far falling behind on the level of schools even though the legislative conditions have been created in the form of the novella of the law 56490 from 1995 on the Councils of Schools. The Councils of Schools were not yet established even in the pilot schools and their activity is mostly substituted by another authorities. The questions related with the problem area of the efficiency and influence of management on the level of documents and reality will be dealt in the third part of the study.

1.2 Contents changes in the pilot schools and their influence on the management and administration

The experiment has been oriented to the changes in the contents and organisation of vocational education and has not considered sufficiently the links to the management and administration of the schools. Nevertheless - as it is a detail in the report by M. Michalíková - it can record some elements that in certain orientations positively influenced the management of the pilot schools. Briefly expressed primary concerns are:

q the orientation of the leadership of these schools to innovations which more expressingly directed the attention of many headmasters to real management ("so that the things happen in the school") instead of the until-now predominant administration of the schools
q meetings of the leadership enabling exchange of experience, inspirations and stimulation for the planned changes
q enabling the foreign visitation and contacts with pilot schools, linkage of the co-operation with the schools of the analogous type abroad which have opened the possibilities of comparison and also stimulation to the "movement" in the desired direction
q enabling the participation of the headmasters in specific educational events (even if not always very appreciated)
q active participation of teachers in the changes to the curricula which have called for the need for better quality of the directive structure and activity, and also the transfer of decision-making powers to the lower levels of operation and the linkange of more workers to the programme teams and methodical bodies
q more favourable conditions for the pilot schools and their leadership set to the statute of the experiment

This list could be continued.

Experimental schools acquired, compared with the other establishments, in substance more freedom and more extensively decisive competence and their activity was relieved of many negative influences following from the unelaborated concept and strategy of the development of vocational education, from imperfections and unsolved questions in the area of the legislation, finance, evaluation and also the personnel policy and operative directions from the higher school authorities.

The more mentioned freedom of the Phare VET pilot schools in the creating of the internal structure, the possibilities of the pedagogical staff to participate in the creation of their own curricula points to more efficiency in the arrangement the organisation structures, to a simpler management system, to the raising of its efficiency, especially if it is the activation of the teachers.

There is a problem with the isolation of the pilot schools given a certain privileged status and so far little penetration of their positive experiences between the others establishments of vocational education. The change of this state and scattering the positive experience of the pilot schools to the other establishments of VET assumes the solution of many problems in the mentioned areas.

In the detailed report by E. Tomíšek, e. g. in the area of legislation is an insensitive determination of the limit of the workers without regards to the specialisation of the individual branches, disrespect to the definite conditions of the school, e. g. a transport subservient, etc. In the area of finance it refers to the non-sufficient transparency and the frequent changes of the rules for the allocation of finance means, to determine allocated volume of wage means as a limited item and the total limitation of the executive competence of the school as a legal subject in this area. As it concerned the subject area of the internal management and administration of the schools, it manifests as a worthwhile task – to clear the concept and strategy of the further development of vocational education (including its branch structure and the network of schools) and a rational balanced division of the competencies and responsibilities between the central and regional (municipal) school bodies and individual schools. Analyses and suggestions for the arrangement of the present state is necessarily co-ordinated with the other groups (finance, legislation, evaluation).

In the area of democratisation of the management it is necessary to do many things – especially in the co-operative or participate conception the management, this in the vertical and especially in the horizontal levels. In the experts' report for the OECD that it is rightly referred that the position of the headmasters is very "strong" and so it is recommended gradually the transition to the "colleague" leadership.

Also the requirement for the raising the efficiency of the management assume the creation of new structures and mechanisms of the management including utilised non-direct or auxiliary tools. As far as the internal management (especially macro-), it is necessary to devote attention to the determination and legislation of "anchored" for the decision process. It is also necessary to consider the proportions between the competencies and the responsibility on all levels of management.

A favourable circumstance for the experimental activities of the pilot schools was the general relative favourable composition of the leadership of those establishments according to the tables. no. 1 and 2 in the annex. In particular it is necessary to indicate more experience of the leaders from the managing of activities, mainly on the lower levels of management. Meanwhile in the general education schools 75–90% of the headmasters assumed their positions after 1989, in pilot schools 44% of the headmasters have been in place 6–10 years and headmasters with more than 11 years also 44%.

However, it is of no account that between the individual headmasters and the smaller groups of the headmasters of pilot schools do not express big differences. We will inform about them on the basis of the empirical determinations in the further parts of the report.

2. THE QUESTIONS OF THE INTERNAL PEDAGOGICAL MANAGEMENT IN THE SCHOOLS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

2.1 Orientation of the activity of the headmasters of the pilot schools

More length in the work of the leaders of the pilot schools - more expressive is their pragmatic orientation (the length of their praxis is approaching the length of the work of the leaders in privatisation enterprising). We are thinking especially of the orientation to the finance and operation of administrative questions which - already indicated Strategic Study (1993) expressively predominate professional pedagogical operation.

This reality once again acknowledges our empirical discoveries according to the most attention and time devoted the headmasters of the experimental schools to the question of finance (95% headmasters), economy and administrative of the school (80%). To that can also be linked good relations with the school bodies and the social partners (95%) and with the community and public (79%, with the parents only 53%). However, it can be said that there exists a little group of headmasters - one quarter to one third, these have their task in the economic-finance area sufficiently secured and can devote more time to the other sections of the school management.

The mentioned direction activities respective of the orientation of managers in the area is almost identical to the control pattern[1] of non-pilot schools (vocational and general educational 87–90%).

A pleasant shift in the positive direction may be the data on the expressive orientation of the headmasters to the creation of conception (programme) schools (94%). This evidently relates partly to the participation of these schools in the Phare programme, partly with the present situation on the market of education with strong superiority of supply over demand. All the mentioned prior orientations can be evaluated to a certain extent as "self-preservation mechanisms" in operation with the knowledge of the headmasters of schools. The mentioned motivation directed practically exclusively towards vocational orientation and the profiling of the school to the selection of sufficiently attractive branches and to some further questions of professional preparation.

2.2 Questions of the creation of the social experience of students and teachers

In contrast to the pilot schools practically to the side of more significant attention of the headmasters of the other schools of vocational education remains the concept of training respective to the orientation of values, the determination of values which the school and teachers intend to profess and support. The relation to the question can be considered as the consequence of the past period when the was training ideologized and in this form also formalized and profaned in the eyes of most of the educationalists. Many headmasters, provided they have ever used this term, don't comprehend it as the creating of social experience of the students (and, naturally, also the teachers) in the process of teaching, its organization and management and the influence of appeal for the whole life and the environment of the school including the relations in the school. The training is comprehended rather in formal dimensions of "proper behaviour", greeting, respect to elders, obedience etc.

With this approach is also connected the demand for the students and the manners of the enforcing thereof. Even if the situation in theoretical and practical teaching considerably differentiates, generally not many pursue what way is correct for attaining the planning results. If it is rather stimulation and developing the interests of the students or the pressure, compulsion, threats and sanctions[2]. Also the way pedagogues deal with the pupils, often manipulating them, many excesses during the examination and evaluation of the pupils, disproportional demands for them in the definite period (due to the bad co-ordination of demands from the teachers), demonstrated preference by the teachers through research, the pupils' conformance and obedience before the pupils listed as "difficult" (even if it is teaching or behaviour), that all expressively influence the instruction understood as the creation of life experience for the pupils. We don't mention the little or larger manifestation of "cheating" between the pupils, which – in its various "gentle" forms – are not such a rare phenomenon as it seems.

Even when the pilot schools devote considerable attention to the mentioned questions of training, the referred phenomena which is "based" on the certain bringing-up "climate" of the school appear to certain extent even in the pilot schools. This – according to the research – is largely determined by the approach and the style of the management of the headmasters of the schools and in return determine all the activities of the schools – including the vocational preparation of pupils.

However, these questions can be considered as not quite adequate with regards to the main orientation of the experiment of the pilot schools. Nevertheless, we assume that even from the view of vocational training that they are the key questions, particularly, with the regard to the need of the life-long education and for the dangerous or critical age of the pupils for their further professional and whole personality development. It is all about pupils creating themselves in the conditions of the transforming society with a substantially shaken system of values.

It is natural that the headmasters of vocational education cannot themselves implement the aforementioned educational influence. They have their deputies and other employees for that. However, they should know the conception and relations between education and management, practically understand them, create in the schools such conditions for their implementation and enforce them. The important factor of the successful influence in the mentioned course is especially the co-operative manner of the school management.

Empirical inquiry which have shown that the headmasters of pilot schools only in a relatively small measure occupied with pedagogical questions - with the exclusion of the materially technical ensuring of the teaching (66%), provided also a more detailed picture of the activities of the headmasters in this area. According to this, e. g., the regulations of the activity of subject commissions devote more often only 22% of the headmasters, to the control of quality the teaching, 37%, regulation of the activities of class teachers, 21% and out of attention, non-teaching (5%). A rising interest is the manifestation about the evaluation (self-evaluation) and the following of the achievement of the graduates in praxis (53%), which can be evaluated as a positive tendency in their managing activity which is necessaryfor any perspective further development.

Individual work with teachers, care of the good conditions of their work and professional growth belong in this area. Even for this activity only a fraction of the headmasters are finding time (42%) and more of them have confessed that they cannot do perform activities at all.

2.3 What can and must the headmasters of the schools do?

To the aforementioned establishment we must proceed realisticly and see them in the context of the size and conditions of individual schools and real possibilities of the headmasters. Especially in the big establishments the headmaster should be a generalist who cannot very much in detail devote all the important areas of the activities of his entrusted school. In each case he should create a clear pedagogical concept of the school, determine the definite goals and tasks, and acquire for them through the other staff members most of the teachers of his school. This basic demand is not yet fulfilled in all the establishments. This is witnessed by the statements of some of the headmasters of experimental schools that they have not been able to works with a group of co-operators and were unable to influence the direction sufficiently. This also applies to experimental schools and to the control pattern of the vocational and general educational schools. A severe weakness is the little efficiency of the work of CSI (particularly in vocational education) and the absence of regular evaluation of the quality and results of the work of the heads of these establishments. Presently it is unclear who, how often and according to what criteria he should perform this evaluation.

3. THE QUESTIONS OF EFFICIENCY OF THE MANAGEMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

A key problem of the whole management and particularly in the system of education are questions of efficiency and consequence of the management and administrative activities on all level of direction. The authors of the Strategic Study as well as experts of OECD pay attention to the report on the state of the system of education in CR. In both documents, on the basis of the analysis of the present state, they suggest definit measures on what we have already characterised generally in the first part of this report.

3.1 On the efficiency of external management

On the level of external management implemented by the centre it concerns a series of measures of the organization, personal and contents nature that ME leaders before 1994 didn't consider a priority. In the deluge of more urgent tasks and in the conditions of distribution of the administrative of vocational education between the ME, Ministry of the Economy (hereafter: MEcon) and the further sections didn't devoted much attention to the tasks in this area – at least initially -not even the new leadership of the ME. Also the experiments of pilot schools moved out of the attention of the centre.

This situation is presently gradually changing. Thanks to the initiative the ME has engaged the situation in our system of education OECD and in the background report and in the report experts OECD. During the negotiations with the OECD body in 1996 in Prague where the conclusions of the Strategic Study were once n again confirmed. Conclusions and recommendations were accepted and have begun to be fulfilled. There are the first steps, especially, in the area of organizational and personnel implementation, where the solution is difficult (the rationalization of the network of schools). In the contents, as far as the innovations, quality and its control etc. are concerned (this again related with the task of CSI) there have been no significant shifts. Displacement is a problem with broad political coherence (regional management and administration)[3]. In detail we express the questions together with certain proposals for the solution in the final part of the report.

More difficult was in thesituation, when the workers from ME were over-loaded by the operative, to change the style and methods of the control activities. However, there was a lack of conception personalities with a new creative approach. So that there is a low level and efficiency of the management and administration in this area, if it is at all real management[4]. Also in this direction in connection with the new staff the situation has gradually changed.

Also CSI with the Phare programme in schools was not engaged. During the time this report was being prepared, a complex inspection at only one of the pilot schools was recorded.

As far as the management on the level of the central element is concerned, all the schools have the obligation to co-operate with the SO who perform series tasks delegated by the centre. The SO has expressed (the same as the Labour Office) to the transformation projects, approved branches taught in the school, designated chairmen of the "maturita" commission and performed many further administrative tasks. Consequential are the powers connected with the distribution of financial means. Many schools indicate to them that they are not very transparent so that there are certain controversies and animosities.

These problems together with some administrative tasks that the SO are obligated to fulfil (statistical sheets, various announcements etc.) lead to the negative opinions of some heads to the present system of control the schools of vocational education. Followers of those opinions refer to the rising tendency towards central directive management in spite of the declared legal subjectivity of schools. As arguments they take the mentioned limited number of workers, limited contribution to wages, limited number of lessons per class, the rigorous measure of teaching duty, interventions of funding economy. The headmasters comprehend that the majority of mentioned restrictions is set by the topical finance situation in education. Nevertheless, they see factors in the implemented and other measures which obstruct the successful implementation of experimentally verified transformation changes in vocational education and the possibilities to improving the efficiency of management.

All along urgently voices from the schools voices argue in to the welfare of the management of schools of vocational education from larger territorial administrative units than they are in today's districts – from the regions. In the regional authorities are in many areas there is expressed hope in the flexible and efficient manner of the management.

3.2 On the efficiency of the internal management

On the efficiency of the internal management in the schools of vocational education it is expressed with a certain portion of precautions. Even if many observations have been realised, interviews with heads and empirical probes, the situation on the individual schools is so far that determination by the definite conditions and is so specific that its generalization is possible only to a certain measure. We attempt it where the objective findings conform in conformity with the statements of the headmasters of the experimental schools.

The introduction may state – on the basis of the inquiry – that even between this group of on the whole quality experienced managerial workers there exist relative considerable differences. Even that the group as a unit obtained non-comparable better care and help – especially from the workers form the Institute of Vocational Research (hereafter: IVR) in the comparison with the other establishments of vocational education.

This differences arise first of all from the polarity between the extent and demand of tasks in the conditions of headlong social changes and high measure autonomy of the schools of vocational education on the one hand and the real abilities and the level of individual headmasters on the other. They are set by the preparation of headmasters, measures and universality of their management competence and particularly, by the ability to purposefully lead and integrate the activity of the team managerial workers from different sections and integrated this into the activity of the school. Inquiry have shown that a key condition of the success is first of all the self-reflection of the headmaster of the school own activities, his operating and organizing ability and efficiency of his appeal to his colleagues.

As a positive indicator of the mentioned qualities of the heads to manifest a measure of ability to delegate the tasks and authority as much as possible of the subordinate workers. A negative indicator is possibly the extent or share of short-term operative tasks in the whole activity of the headmaster in comparison with the part of his activity which is important from the long-term view. In the first case it is definite 60% of headmasters who didn't continually delegate the tasks to their subordinates. Prior to short-term tasks it is often 32% and sometimes 60% of headmasters.

Consequential is in this continuity and knowledge that only part of the headmasters are continually planning their daily activity (ca. 58%). Determining priorities is similar to with. In addition, the heads (ca 58%) sometime cannot manage to fulfil many of the planned tasks (and not always the less important) due to the reason of time.

Sequential and seasonal data were acquired from the control pattern of the headmasters of the schools.

On the reasons that some limits have shown many empirical data on the basis of the actual expression of the school headmasters. Almost all heads state that the causes are on their part, that the tasks and duties are included (63% sometimes, 26% often). However, they confess that part of their tasks and duties they cannot fulfil (or not sufficiently and qualitatively). More data is connected with this about the little concernig the colleagues, the self-control and the time "for myself". All the respondents state that the function and the tasks "swallow" them up so much that they have less time for themselves, care for their health, rest, personal interests etc. This situation is projected to their self-education, for which according to the 63% of headmasters have no time (and, probably, firm will or power). In contrast to this, there is a group composed of ca. one third of the heads of pilot schools (37%), who are devoted to their education permanently[5]. From all those data and further determinations we may deduce a conclusion about the differentiation of models of activities of the management and the style of operation at the individual schools of the experiment and draw their main types. However, this is a task for further deeper research that exceedes this task.

However, causes of mentioned limitation are not only of subjective nature and are not only in the schools and because of their leaders. From further causes influencing the entire system of management we mentioned the activities of CSI. Also the system of education of management has remained during the entire time after 1989 out of the attention of the centre and has up to now lacked a standard which would determine the qualification demands on the leaders and competencies, which they should acquire as before their being appointed to the their functions.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the introduction of this part we once again remind the reader that many problems in management vocational education might be solved by financial or legislative tools which other work groups of the evaluation team carried out. Also the questions about the operation of the contents of education and the determination of its quality are a subject of the interest of the relevant working groups. However, we cannot help mentioning in general some of our determined touches about the mentioned areas.

For the central level of management there is the recommendation organised and structural, partly about the conclusion matter-of-fact of the subject nature. There is nothing to add to the motivated suggestions, e. g., to the appointment of the Deputy-Minister of Education for Vocational Education, to the created Secretariat of Vocational Education at the ME or to the constitution of the State Council for Vocational Qualification and awarding of certificates. Similarly, there is the exercise and significance of the National Council for Education, whose part should be the curricular council also for vocational education. In these structures should be represented all the subjects who are interested in the results of vocational education – primarily the social partners.

In the present period in this connection the recommendation already prepared for solution or implementation seems to be for example the appointment of the Deputy of the Minister at the Ministry of Education, mentioned above and discussing the contents of the National Board of Education and its composition and filling with activity. The future of other recommendations is unclear for a while. As especially urgent in this connection we see the activity of the Research Institute of Vocational and Technical Education as the future body for profiling professions, standards and certifications.

The solution to strategic problems is even more complicated, namely the elaboration of the whole development conception of vocational education, which is more and more required by schools. There is the question whether there are objective conditions for such tasks under the non-existence of broader society's prospect and entire conception of the development of the educational system. In any case it is necessary for the centre to respond to some urgent problems. It concerns mainly the more significant influencing of the quality and control of vocational education for the affecting of its structural development, especially from the point of view of a branch system, on network rationalization and school size. The Ministry of Education deals with the above mentioned problem, and has submitted the proposal of a set bill. But we look very sceptically at the solution of this problem from the centre.

As far as the quality and the control of vocational education is concerned, present possibilities and restrictions of the Czech School Inspectorate in this field are generally known. There is the question whether this state can be essentially changed in the future under the present organizational scheme and personnel structure of this institution (which is connected with salary and other conditions for this work).

We therefore recommend the consideration of the possibility of creating a relatively independent organizational unit for inspection of vocational education within the Czech School Inspectorate. Another possibility is to initiate the establishment of a private agency to which would be delegated related responsibilities and with financial support from the state and at the request of school would independently perform an audit of these schools and publish its results which could bein fixed periods of time.

Without regard to the option of a certain solution or their combination it would be necessary to choose and prepare approximately 30 knowledgeable peers from this field for this activity and to create for their work responding conditions, especially the conditions of salaries.

Regarding the structural development of vocational education we consider it important to try to solve markable deformations on market of educational demand and supply on the basis of improving the information about labour market development in near the future.

The UIV (Centre of Information in Education) should include also some data on the performance of graduates of individual fields (schools) on the labour market into an overview on the results of work of vocational school education. It is necessary with significant support of Ministry of Education to inform by all means parents about those findings and to influence the educational demand in this way.

It is necessary in perspective – similarly as in foreign countries – to ask forforecasting studies elaborating on the probable oversaturated labour market development both in fields already in operation today by educational demand, and in other important fields where, to the contrary, the demand is incredibly low.

During the definition of some tasks from the centre to the medium management level there is no doubt the implementation of strategic study conclusions in the OECD expert report and many other documents about the establishment of regional level school management (self – government), where practical policy would be implemented and the reform process of vocational education would be standardised. It is obvious that for these tasks, district units are to small and the centre on the other hand is too distant. It is a possible to create effective infrastructures for communication in the regions, including schools, labour officies, chambers, local authorities, enterprises and other institutions.

As stated in OECD documents there is a proposal on type of labour and responsibilities of regional school offices, including, for example, the rationalization of school nets, cooperation on the progress and modernization of curricula, supporting services for schools, evaluation etc.

Therefore principle solution of these problems, which is restricted by political decisions, isn't in sight in the near future, considerations on temporary measures are supplied. Use of regional offices for apprentice preparation is one if them for this propose. Those bodies however have been liquidated. Another possibility is to temporarily delegate these tasks to some selected school offices, provide appropriate competencies and responsibilities apart from their present duties also these functions to schools for the establishment of a second cycle, which would be carried out in the future by regional bodies. It is a natural that for these activities conditions have to be created especially regarding financing and personnel.

Regarding the internal school management of vocational education the following conclusion may be formulated: current schools' competencies (nowadays mostly the competencies of schoolmasters), even if they are greatly compared to the past, they still do not correspond – according to the school management – to the needs and prerequisites of high-quality operation and development of individual schools. Especially the transfer of these schools under the administration of the Local School Authorities is perceived by the schoolmasters as a considerable infringement on their hitherto competencies. By analogy, they bear with displeasure "tasking" done by institutions with some sort of school control competencies (Financial Authority, Fire Protection, Civil Defence, Work Safety Inspectorate, Local Sanitation Officer etc.).

Inspite of the fact that many of the problems exceed the framework of education, we find it necessary to consider whether there is the possibility to make some corrections in legislation and school-financing as the schoolmasters point out and as we have tried to demonstrate with some examples in the first part of this report. At this moment the present optimalization of the secondary schools net offers an opportunity to raise the competencies and responsibilities of their school management in the framework of a given normative financing system. Above all we mean to create an optimum space for financial decision making on the school level. And at the same time the schools should be allowed to submit proposals for creating their own organisational structures and be also given an opportunity to submit for accreditation their own educational programmes.

On the other hand there is a confirmation of OECD experts' statements on a "strong head school position", which has its negative features, that those managers are not actually (however informally) responsible to anybody. Nobody also "pushes" those heads not having sense for the new, so that they are able to educate themselves further and "work on themselves."

That is why measures oriented towards school inspection we recommend the supplement of duties of this bodies – for newly appointed heads after one year, for other heads always after 2–3 years- to make a deep evaluation of their work with appropriate conclusions. For this to utilise besides knowledge and conclusions from inspections above all an analysis of annual report evaluation about activities of a given school and other materials, eventually including knowledge of other bodies and organizations. Nevertheless the question is remains whether the school inspection can and is allowed to proceed with this evaluation and if it know who other would implement it.

The second recommendation is related to possible corrections of school heads – school boards. We think that it is necessary to carry out analysis of the reasons, why these bodies aren't established or do not operated and attempt to remove factors, which are against it. Present adviser councils can only partly substitute for school boards.

The third recommendation arrises from very big differences among "pilot" school heads and aim towards the different forms of managerial education and self-development (self – education) of the management. The higher external forms of this education should be obligatory for all newly appointed heads and for those who are candidates for this post. In 3 – 5 years demanding managerial preparation should be one of the most important criteria for competition.

Also other heads of schools and establishment of vocational education should be stimulated to participation in various forms of in service-training and self-education, whose content should be only "education for understanding", but to much greater extent than the present "education for action".

In this context it is necessary to essentially make criteria for the accreditation for the providing of these educational services. Good manager praxis could be considered as a part of preparation as well as its developing by organized introduction "coaching and mentoring" form i. e. by the providing of definite individual help by good school heads to school management who have problems and especially to heads newly appointed. Important help can be also using a method called "shadowing" i. e. "shadow leaders" among schools and inside the school. All of these forms must be organized. Also in this point again heavy needs for regional body activities have been appearing.

Such important means for increasing the quality of works of schools we considered their regular comparison. For this it is necessary to lay down a notion of quality, this means with respect to vocational education and management and if possible establish set of objective indicators for evaluation of their performance. Except for mentioned educational standards this set should include among others also the quality relationships in the school and the formation of social experience of pupils and teachers. A proposed group in the framework of the Czech School Inspectorate or an eventually proposed private agency should participated in the creation of this system. The UIV (Centre of Information in Education) should help in this direction with the gaining and disseminating information.

As an important form of comparison within the framework of the school it is possible to understand their self-evaluation, which is anchored in the novel of law 564/90 from 1995(no. 139), according to which all of the schools are obliged to prepare an annual comprehensive evaluation of their own work and published it. The question is if hitherto norms sufficiently define its content and clearly establish – what its function should be and to where evaluation is going. We consider worthwhile to evaluate, if and to which extent evaluating reports of the schools of vocational education contribute to the clear moving of the work of this institutions. If critical analysis of planned tasks fulfilled and state of school work is not only matter of the management, but also critical self-reflection of the work of the school and the actual work of all its teachers.

At the same time we regard worthwhile the creation of conditions in order that school users – students- express by appropriate manner their opinion on the level of education. It assumes from leaders and teachers not only the ability of reflection of their own work but also the openness and willingness on the basis of students' evaluation to derive for himself/herself concerning conclusions and to be ready to change his/her approaches, forms and work methods.

Regarding the evaluation the efficiency of school management, it is necessary to relate it both to the process of forming as well as programme fulfilling as well as the school plans, and to the achievement of results.

At the same time we consider it valuable to generalise domestic and foreign experience (in particular "Better school" movement) and accept specific set of marks, which characterise good school respective quality of their management, guaranteeing a high level of school operation, its quality and at the same time also steps leading to next improving its work, to further development. Also this – in the essence a research task- cannott remain out of the attention of the school inspection, or even other organizations for which the task will be the auditing of schools.

As valuable knowledge and experience from the work of the pilot schools we consider the determination of the key role of managers during inside changing of the vocational school. Therefore we consider during experimental school experience spreading to be a decisive strategic orientation on the leading fellows of these institutions, on quality selection, professional and managerial preparation, regular evaluation of activities and maximum stimulation (also financial) on performance and school work results. We consider it valuable to understand and evaluate performance and results not only from the view of immediate school interest, but also the needs of social partners and not last in society, especially students, including the possibilities of their actual and perspective placement in labour market and also civil life.

5. SUMMARY

The given report, which evaluates the experiences of the pilot schools within the framework of the Phare VET program and which discusses suggestions and recommendations present in the Strategical Study and in documents for OECD, is divided into, besides an introduction, four parts.

The first part is concerned with the relationship between changes in the content and organization of vocational and technical education and their influence on the consequences for directing and managing the observed schools. The second part is dedicated to questions of the apprehension and approach of pedagogical conception and to the activities of experimental schools. The third part addresses the knowledge of the exploration of the efficiency of management on all levels. The fourth part consists of conclusions and recommendations.

The starting points and sources which the report utilises and the objects, orientations, organization and methods of exploration are formulated in the introduction. In the first part, a short description of the conclusions and recommendations of the basic strategical documents and an evaluation of their fulfilment are first given. Then, the mutual relationships and influences between changes in the content and organization of vocational and technical education (in the pilot schools) and the management of these schools are in their entirety positively evaluated. Positive mutual influences have been occurring in spite of the fact that the main orientation of the content of the experiment has not been directed explicitly toward efforts for changes in the domain of the management of these schools. Among other things, this section states that in the domain of educational proposals as well as in the adaptation of school management to new societal conditions, revolutionary changes have happened which do not have an analogy in any other segments of our educational system. In comparison with other institutions of vocational and technical education, these changes are even more significant in the pilot schools.

In the second part, based on empirical research, management activities, in particular the extent to which administrators of the pilot schools dedicate themselves to individual groups of management activities, are evaluated. The basic evaluation from the strategic study that school management's predominant orientation toward financial and operational management tasks at the expense of professional pedagogical management has been confirmed. A significant orientation of the school headmasters toward forming a school conception (program) is a pleasant fact. However, this orientation is almost exclusively oriented in relation to the professional aspect. In some cases, evaluative and educational dimensions toward forming the social experiences of the students are missing.

In the third part, the efficiency of external management is evaluated and the fulfilled as well as thus far unfulfilled recommendations and conclusions of the mentioned strategic documents are pointed out. The last steps of the centre in the domain of personnel policies, efforts to solve urgent questions of the current instability between educational supply and demand, and efforts for rationalization of the school system are evaluated generally positively. However, a sceptical opinion considering the possibility of success of the mentioned steps is in the majority.

Creating school authorities within the framework of regional government bodies – regions – is considered the key for overcoming the mentioned, as well as other, problems. In the materials for OECD, even the composition and main functions of these school authorities, with which we identify, are suggested.

A great problem of external management is the insufficient frequency and degree of school supervision and control in the domain of vocational and technical education.

Concerning the internal management, the report evaluates generally positively the qualities of the headmasters of experimental schools even though it does not hide a significant internal differentiation among the whole set from the point of view of the professional level as well as managerial abilities of individuals. Only about one third of the headmasters can be considered to be top managers with a full ability to critically reflect on their own activities, with relevant management and organizational skills, with an active relationship toward further self-education, and with the ability to efficiently influence their co-workers.

The final part of the report concentrates on a few significant questions. Concerning the centre, the necessity of the elaboration of the general conception of vocational and technical education and the creation of relevant central and regional bodies, as suggested in strategical documents, is once again emphasised. In the domain of quality improvements and control, the creation of an independent subject for supervision over vocational and technical education within the Czech School Inspectorate is recommended to consider or, as the case may be, to establish a special private agency for this purpose (with support from the government, economic chambers and other institutions).

Since establishment of the CI does not seem likely in the near future, it is recommended to consider a temporary solution. We mean accrediting a few School Offices (in the centres of the supposed regions) to perform the jurisdictions in the relations toward high schools, which should be performed by the regional bodies in the future. These Local School Offices would have to be equipped for this task because it would mean adding new tasks to their already current ones.

Considering the internal management of the schools of vocational and technical education, it is suggested, besides some corrections in legislature and financing, allowing them to submit for approval their own organizational structures and educational programs which reflect the specifications of the school and the necessity of praxes. Besides increasing the demands of inspection authorities for the quality of the annual evaluation reports, regular and demanding evaluations of school principals are suggested. These evaluations should occur after one year for new headmasters and after two, and eventually three, years for the others.

A great emphasis in the report is placed on the activities of School Boards which could be a certain corrective factor toward the activities of a school principal. Because these bodies do not function even in the pilot schools, it is recommended to elaborate an analysis of the reasons of this state followed by arrangements to improve this situation. Further, the subjects of attention are various forms of education and self-education. It is suggested that, within the horizon of the next 3 to 5 years, the participation in demanding studies of "the school management" would be considered an important criteria for contenders for the positions of school headmasters of vocational and technical education.

We consider the regular comparisons of vocational and technical education for improving the quality of the work of schools an important factor. It is suggested to use or, as the case may be, to modify the set of indicators of so called "Better schools", which would allow this kind of comparison. For self-evaluation, it is recommended to include not only the knowledge of administrators and the critical self-reflection of teachers themselves, but gradually also the opinions of students.

At the end of the report, knowledge of the key tasks of the schools' headmasters during internal changes in schools is emphasised. It is recommended, during the enlargement of the knowledge of the experimental schools as the main strategical orientation, to orient the main attention toward these administrators, starting with their selection, regular evaluation of their work, as well as creating necessary conditions and maximal concerns (financial ones as well) in performances and results of the work of schools.

FINANCING

Igor HARTMAN

R__ena DOLEŽALOVÁ
Petr JADRNÝ
Václav JEŘEK
Petr KAPLAN
Arnošt VESELÝ

1. INTRODUCTION – GOALS AND METHODS

By the report presented we want to contribute to the general aim which is the development of VET as an important support element of Czech social development. We deal with the question of funds and financing that we consider as the means of fulfilling the program aims in the field of VET.

The significant source of analysed information were the data on financing and financial situation gained in 19 pilot schools.

Gradually we have dealt with the following levels of financing and the relation among them:

q the financing of each pilot school as a unique organisation with certain organisation features- content, management, including features and characteristic of financing and factors that influence them

q the financing of pilot schools as groups of organisations which in the point of view of education proceed according to certain specific programs, regarded as perspective and which should be spread throughout the whole VET

q the development of VET financing in comparison with financing recommendations included in the Strategic Paper on Vocational Education and Training and the part concerning the VET financing in The Report of OECD Examiners on the Czech Republic's Policy for Education

In the framework of the methodical approach, we took an interest in searching for the intersectional problematic points in the VET financing, their features, manifestations, causes and their possible solutions, that is the devising of such measures, which would enhance the effectiveness of using funds allocated to VET.

In the analytic phase of this searching and the formulating financing problems, we examined also conditions that at first looked as if they had no direct connection with financing (e. g. type of organisation of secondary vocational schools, ownership of property, the level of the managerial skills of management of VET, relationships in which VET is involved). Because of these often neglected circumstances mentioned above, we want to focus on their connection with financing effectiveness.

As for financing in a narrower sense we dealt with financing operations fixed by financial legislation, budgetary rules, accounting laws, regulations on budgetary structure, an account bill that has features common for all legal and physical persons. However, the substance of our approach was based on the investigation of actual consequences of financial operation. That is why we dealt with financing in a broader context as well.

The reported is divided into 9 chapters, completed by supplements.

The data and information analysis on VET schools are mainly in prevailed in chapters 2, 4 and 5. Chapter 6 functions as a review of recommendations included in the Strategic Paper on Vocational Education and Training and the part concerning the VET financing in The Report of OECD examiners on the Czech Republic Policy for Education. The formalised notes on the implementation of recommendations and in first quarter ofn 1997 is the essential part of this chapter.

Chapters 3 and 8 have extraordinary positions in the Report, mainly because of their synthetic and crowning character as well as for the author's effort to formulate recommendations which would lead to more effective management in pilot schools as well as in the whole field of VET. The results of the group work is the outline of possibilities of the future development of VET financing in the Czech republic and propositions of results and recommendations.

2. PRESENT PROBLEMS OF VET FINANCING AND POSSIBILITIES OF ITS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The present problems of VET financing becomes evident on the one hand by the constant pressure on increasing the State budget expenses, on the other hand by the spending of funds which can not be always called effective.

The main causes of problems of the VET financing are the following:

q inefficient network of VET
q excessive supply of vocational and study subjects
q extreme number of state apprentices in vocational subjects
q small diversification of VET promoters
q decreased interest of headmasters of vocational schools in school management

Further, it's necessary to deal with the following topics:

q the discrepancy between interest in study and vocational subjects and needs and possibilities of labour market
q the economic and legal types of vocational. schools
q prescriptive financing
q remunerating of teachers and some other problems

The solutions of increased efficiency of the VET financing are to be found

a) in the present Czech educational system

b) in other educational systems, offering other external conditions and circumstances. The features of other systems, which we will not consider for the present, would be a variant of "modular training" with using the present network of vocational schools or with using new founded "lower" vocational schools. Not before completion of these years (up to 3 years) of more general orientated and "lower" types of vocational training, the student would finish their training at schools focused on a specific technical-economical occupation and worker's professions.

In the subsequent text , the only solutions mentioned are ones which are under the present Czech educational system and respect basic preconditions that are the length of basic school, the length of compulsory school attendance, the existing structure of education at SVS and STS, the termination of VET education by the apprentice exam or by "maturita" etc.

Problems No. 1 and 2.:

The inefficient network of VET (problem No. 1) and the excessive supply of vocational and study subjects (problem No. 2)

Both problems are dealt with together because they are closely linked to each other. They have similar causes of origin and the solutions proposed are also closely linked.

In comparison with 1990, in 1995 the number of vocational schools increased almost by a half. Most of all there was an increase in the number secondary vocational schools, to the number of which more than doubled. One of the reasons for the increase, was the inception of 163 new Home Economics Schools (rodinné školy) because of the bad naming of the schools mentioned above because it concerns the fields in the name of the school. In reality, these schools were often only formally (administratively) separated from the original secondary vocational school or secondary technical school. However, the number of secondary vocational schools decreased by almost a quarter in response to the declining interest of applicants in vocational training. The problem of the redundant capacities of schools was solved by the transformation of approximately 200 schools into a new type of secondary school – integrated secondary school. Because of declining number of pupils, the dramatic decline in the average size of vocational schools has taken place which leads to the declining effectiveness of funds provided by the State budget.

The other cause of VET problems that has a connection with financial effectiveness is the extension of offer of subjects. The long-standing concentration on traditional subjects has been abandoned by the schools. Aiming at providing pupils and their parents with a wider range of subjects, school management has accepted inhibition, and sometimes even complete abandonment of traditional subjects and replaced them with new subjects, often very dissimilar to former ones. It was the instability and indefiniteness of the labour market accompanying the whole transformation of the Czech economy (especially changes in the contents and extent of production and business) which has significantly influenced this problem. The inexperience of the state administration and the public in the processing and evaluating information about the mechanism of the labour market have also had negative consequences.

As a result of not wholly co-ordinated development of the VET network and the precipitous development of VET subjects at those schools, there was the incomplete equipment of schools for vocational training and a low extent of providing with - sometimes even lack of providing with - qualified teaching of special vocational subjects. The involvement of external teachers was above the useful proportion between internal and external teachers. In general, we may describe this problem as diminishing the quality of vocational schools.

But the recent development of vocational education has also had its positive features, especially in widening the range of the offer of subjects and the improvement of private education from which the greater possibility of reaching secondary vocational education follows. The larger offer in the area of pupils has promoted the accessibility of schools. The higher level of competition would have a positive effect on the higher quality of training. These features of VET development should be utilised by the state administration in the future process of limiting and eliminating of schools of poor quality, which should be done irrespectively of the type of school (state, private, or parochial).

The certain above abundance of offer (supply exceeding demand) and "capacity reserve" would, if they are to be kept in the future, must be used according to the demands of immediate society.

Nowadays, the problematic expansion of the VET network and subject offer from the point of view of youth and future application in the labour market cannot be yet be evaluated with adequate accuracy. However, from the partial knowledge we may preliminarily observe certain discrepancies between the possibilities and options in vocational training and possible employment in the labour market, although a small a majority of graduates of certain profiles over the possibility of the labour market to employ them as a whole is to a certain level positive for employers because they can choose only the best applicants. The pupil's awareness of competition after graduation , would have made them more responsible and active in their studying.

Having reached the excessive level of the VET offer , the "war" for students has started. Their number is, in comparison with the relatively unlimited possibility of the expanding number of pupils at vocational schools, restricted by a defined and unalterable number of children in the age group.

An unfavourable financial consequence, that of the ineffective spending of funds, is linked also with a necessity to maintain a higher than necessary capacity of the school on the condition that the so-called fixed expenses remain the same (keeping and maintaining empty capacities, especially those that cannot be temporarily hired as superfluous; it is also ineffective to keep superfluous VET staff)

When evaluating the negative features in VET development, it is necessary to distinguish between the features which are momentary, and will be regulated and reduced to a accessible point themselves by the process of " self-development" and the ones which will have to be influenced by legal or administrative measures.

When dealing the with negative manifestations of the not sufficiently co-ordinated development of the VET net , and the abundance of subjects supplied by VET education, no one can talk about big financial losses because it is impossible to measure these losses. But we can say with certainty, that serious financial losses in the future will occur, if adequate precautions are not accepted in time

Solutions to problems No. 1 and 2:

The careful application of the normative schedule of funds according to the number of pupils, complexity of a vocational subjects and significant features of the labour market in a given school district, enables the reconstruction the normative and the creation of a connection with the educational result.

The optimisation of the secondary vocational school network depends on the labour market and agreements with social partners (employers, manufacturing associations, industrial and business chambers, trade unions, local authorities, parents organisations, labour offices etc.).

For the process of optimising the network of the VET offer it is necessary to form criteria involving the following features:

- the achievement and success of educational activity
- interest in graduating in subject
- the employment of graduates in praxis (in the labour market)
- the allocation of the network of other vocational schools
- existence of financial management (the amount of economic activity, accessibility of off-budgetary sources, write-offs and the like) and what will be attained by possible change
- the number and structure of schools employees
- the space capacity and equipment with respect to subjects taught as well as their long-term advantages or disadvantages
- the possibility of transferring school activity to another state school of the possibility of their privatisation
- the evaluation of school Inspectorate

The determination of a useful degree of "over-capacity" of vocational training with the use of criteria of the VET school network rationalisation mentioned above and educational offer on them with utilising discussions with partners (companies, schools, chambers, education offices, local authorities and in particular labour offices).

The problem No. 3.

The abnormally high number of the so-called state apprentices

The category of "state apprentice" came into existence during the extensive process of privatisation of state property, transformation of business and production and during the time of an extensive change in property rights. In its substance, it is the problem of relationships between the state and private sectors in the field of health care, education, the providing of social and charitable activities, housing and so on. Together with the launch of the extensive privatisation process, it was agreed upon that state must protect activities that were assumed to be, for certain period of time, of no interest to the new holders (or the new holders were assumed not to have good intentions with them) . It was also vocational education as well as property used in the teaching of apprentices that was removed from the extensive privatisation by legislative power. In establishing vocational schools and educational centres, the state, represented by respective ministries and departments, replaced state companies.

The process was complicated by subsequent changes of competencies among central bodies, it was necessary to ensure the continuance of the operations of vocational schools, which involved the continuance of investment construction. It was decided that secondary vocational schools and centres of training will be independent law subjects in the legal and economic-legal relationships. In accordance with this, a type of school organisation with a high level of independence was developed, accompanied by extensive property in the own administration and followed by the high responsibility of management in ensuring maximal working utilisation of the property. The best sort of funding revealed was funding from the State budget.

Funding from sponsors, originally received in higher proportions, was revealed to be very precarious. Problems of entrepreneurs , connected with the insufficient sale of products on the market, extensive borrowing and the generally adverse situation (failure to pay for goods among entrepreneurs), were considerably expressed by the reluctance of entrepreneurs to fund new apprentices and by irregular payments for sponsored apprentices. It caused the diminished motivation of school management of VSS to make arduous and financially precarious contacts with apprentice sponsors.

The State budget became the steadiness and guarantee for the survival for the majority of VSS and VST. The number of state apprentices has raised rapidly. Although it should have been only temporary and a passing measure and the number of apprentices should have not risen considerably , we must notice that the outcome is very different. In 1997 85% of VSS and VTS pupils are funded from the State budget.

The separation of apprentice training from the needs of praxis, from the real needs of the labour market , and the non-participation of sponsors in training is deepened by the rigidity of VSS and VTS management to produce graduates of traditional subjects in numbers corresponding to preceding years and parents' wishes.

In general, we may say that the present state is closely connected with the privatisation of state property, with an incorrect estimate of business sphere behaviour, the insolvency of entrepreneurs, the reclassification of production in privatised companies and so on. These conditions have caused a situation in which it is difficult to evaluate the real needs of the individual subjects of VET. From this point of view we can clearly understand the attempts of VET management to have as many pupils as possible and to gain as many funds as possible from the State budget which does not follow such stringent control of pupils as it is in the case of training as a service for a definite entrepreneur.

The state as a customer, imagines in this regard security for the independent schools, unfortunately it's not so from the point of view of future labour market needs. However, we must note that the labour market in the Czech Republic is very unstable and unreadable. The present "over-employment" and low productivity of labour make the speculation of future labour market needs very difficult.

We cannot say that there is no interest of entrepreneurs in the performance and high quality of VET gradients. Yet , they are not willing to manifest their interest by the contributory, direct and regular sponsoring of training, but by irregular forms: by providing them with a study grant in the form of a scholarship etc. Nowadays, the entrepreneurs have complete surety that the state will ensure the capacity of the VET school at its own expense, and that it will produce more apprentices that is necessary for the private sector need. Entrepreneurs are aware of the fact that under the present conditions they need not fund and support education. That is why they can non-binding focus on supporting the influence of families and some pupils. Furthermore, the current legislation does not guarantee them the employment of the sponsored apprentice.

The funding of a high number of state apprentices is unfavourable, from the point of view of the state budget. The number of state apprentices has shown a rapid rise: in 1990 there were 20,000 state apprentices, while in 1997 already 160,000.

If in 1996 the average yearly expenses for the training of one pupil at a SVS was 40 000 Kč then, the total number of pupils amounts to 160 000, the costs for every one percent of VET pupils was 64,000,000 Kč. If we took into consideration that only 10 % of the state apprentices in apprenticeship training , we can state that roughly half of the 4, 800, 000, 000 Kč spent in 1996 ensuring the specialised training of state pupils is a problematic expense of the state budget.

Solution to problem No. 3.:

A Severe measure: The abolishment of the category of "state apprentice", following by the finishing of the state budget providing the financing of VET training at a fixed date. For this measure, it is necessary that social partners come into political agreement among themselves. Simultaneously, it is necessary to put into effect a new legal amendment which would rule out the state from the VET financing and support the involvement of a non-state sphere.

A Severe measure with a smaller extent, but from the point of view of the state logical and legitimised, would be the abolishment of the state apprentice in private schools.

As softer measures we may note the following solutions:

q reduction of the normative for training (to use more favourable normative)

q motivation of entrepreneurs by the restitution of SVS property , especially into the hands of large and stabilised companies. The restitution must be conditioned by negotiation about using of property restituted, the probation period and negotiations ensuring the utilisation of restituted property for training purposes for 20 – 30 years and so on. The possibilities of restitution: gratuitous (free of charge), charged price, market price. We recommend gratuitous transfer of property. In this way, the state should gain exemption from property care as well as from state apprenticeship. The value of property given should be lower than the level of funding , expended long-term funding by State budget the operation on SVS and STS and state apprentices.

There is also the possibility that the property of SVS and STS, together with VET training duty, isn't put into companies and entrepreneurs but into manufacturing associations, chambers of industry and commerce, employer's associations, "guild associations", possibly civic associations or general beneficial organisations , churches etc.

The positive result of the recommended solutions should be the diversification and the higher competition between SVS owners and VET which would be more oriented towards the labour market.

The final goal should not be the final abolishment of the category of state apprentice but the reduction of their proportion to non-state apprentices so that at the most 5–10% of state apprentices would be trained at the expense of the state. Funds should not be provided by Ministry of Education Budget but exclusively by the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. State apprentices as a state order would be placed (assigned) by labour offices that have knowledge of the possibilities and needs of the regional labour market and which would also take into account health and mental limitations of certain parts of the populations. Thus apart from other things, the need for re-qualification would be diminished. For state apprentice funding it would be possible to use funds concentrated in the employment fund.

The lightest measure, which in the beginning did not directly attack the state apprentice at all, would be the transfer of funds to the state apprentice from budget of the Ministry of Education to the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs following by the extension of labour office functions to negotiate with and refund the orders of state apprentices. Even this lightest measure would bring benefits in the form of bringing apprentices' training closer to labour market needs. However, it would not mean the full connection between the labour market and training and would not reduce the present ineffectiveness of state apprentice expenses.

Another way of reducing, or possibly even abolishing the category of state apprentice, are taxes allowances for entrepreneurs who would fully fund the complex training of apprentices. Because it is not possible to consider using use our tax system for this purpose in the next few years, we recommend taking into consideration carefully the subsidy politics for entrepreneurs and their chambers as a proportion of their expenses spent on basic (primary), and possibly on further vocational training (secondary), or possibly on re-qualification. The budget of the Ministry of Education would be diminished for the funds spent in this way.

There is another way to reduce the presently very unfavourable state of state apprentice numbers, that is to increase contributions to the Employment Fund for entrepreneurs who don't finance vocational training and, on the contrary, decrease contributions for entrepreneurs who fund vocational training directly. The state would use these gained funds for the refunding of expenses of state apprentice training.

Problem No. 4:

The small diversification of VET promoters

The promoter of the majority of vocational schools is the state which is responsible for their equipment and operation. The promoters of private vocational schools have mostly been physical persons, nowadays the most common form are limited companies. Only exceptionally are the promoters companies, churches or local governments. We do not know any school in charge of beneficial organisations.

The advantages of diversification of a school's promoters are known from foreign experience:

q an increase in the level of competition in the VET offer
q the higher effectiveness of management
q a reduction in the pressure on the state budget
q the decomposition of the responsibilities for the training
q the bringing of education closer to the definite needs of the employees and the district

Solution to problem No. 4:

Besides the state, the present legislation make it possible for legal persons to be from share companies, local governments, churches, chambers of employees and manufacturers to beneficial organisation. For the implementation of this project it is necessary to construct conditions acceptable for the future provider, but also ones which would secure state property against abuse.

Problem No. 5.

Economic-legal types of vocational schools

Our analysis proceeded from investigations of present variants of economic-legal types and property rights to training institutions. The effort of the effectiveness of evaluation follows. from this, Although in the following text theoretically possible combinations of providing are not mentioned all, property and utilisation relationships and types of apprentice training funding, under the frame of this combinations, the most common types of combinations are presented.

Type A

Complex state SVS with theoretical and practical education .

Provider. Ministry of Education (school office)

The owner of all buildings, interior equipment and land: the state exclusively

Training of pupils is funded only by the state (variant: a part of pupils is sponsored by entrepreneurs, but their training takes place on state property)

Type B

Complex state SVS with theoretical and practical education .

Provider. Ministry of Education (school office).

(variant: the provider of the workplace, which is at the entrepreneur location, is the entrepreneur)

The owner of all buildings, interior equipment (possibly of a part of buildings and interior equipment) for theoretical education is the state.

The owner of buildings and interior equipment for vocational training is the entrepreneur.

(Variant: The owner of buildings and interior equipment, that is at the entrepreneur location is the state or another Variant: The owner of buildings for vocational training is the entrepreneur , the owner of interior equipment is the state).

The owner of all buildings and land is the entrepreneur , the owner of interior equipment is the state.

The training of pupils is funded only by the state (variant: some of the pupils is sponsored by entrepreneurs).

The training of pupils is funded only by the state (variant: some of the pupils is sponsored y entrepreneurs, but their training takes place on the state property)

Type C

The provider of the complex SVS is an entrepreneur.

The owner of all buildings, interior equipment and land is the entrepreneur (variant: for example the owner of buildings, or equipment for vocational training is another entrepreneur.)

The owner of buildings and land is the state or municipality that hire out this property to the entrepreneur.

Pupils' training is wholly funded by sponsoring. The provider is given a subsidy from the state. (Variant: some of the pupils are state apprentices).

Type D

Incomplete SVS (for ensuring theoretical education).

The provider is the state or an entrepreneur.

The owner of buildings, land and interior equipment is the state or an entrepreneur (variant: various combinations of property rights). Pupils' training is funded by the state or is sponsored (variant: combination of funding of state and sponsoring).
In educational relation to these the incomplete SVS are practical training centres (provided by the state or by an entrepreneur) and workplaces of practical training (provided always by an entrepreneur).

The effectiveness of financing in the relation to organisationally – legal types and their combinations mentioned above wasn't examined directly and exhaustively. As to the effectiveness of administratively legal forms, we may further say that that because of the normative approach in VET financing, the kinds of these forms fall back in their importance when evaluating their financing effectiveness, and have usually a secondary, although not negligible significance. The factors of the primary significance are ones mentioned above, especially in problems No. 1 and 2 in chapter 8. The types discussed and the types in problem No. 5 have an influence rather on clear organisation (visibility), the securing of funds spent and general financing atmosphere than on the extent of the fund.

For modern and performance (effective) VET economic-legal , property rights are not of primary and decisive (fatal) condition , more important is the good conception, acceptation of this conception by partners and high-quality ensuring of VET as a function. From this point of view we prefer functional financing rather than the financing of organisations and financing which take the economic-legal form as a basic criterion.

Solution to the problem No. 5:

When the budgeting of funds for VET prioritises the further processing of the indicators (index) of normative financing that are connected with the functioning of vocational training.

Problem No. 6:

Decreased interest of headmasters of vocational schools in school management

In general (on average) , the headmasters of vocational schools , their deputies and line managers do have not sufficient knowledge about VET economic operation and of the functional context of their activities. They are not aware of the fact that not only the management of the educational process and teachers is part of the entire management. VET directors underestimate the fact that financing management must be an indisputable and incontestable part of their management activities (focused, for instance, on personnel management).

From the analysis of pilot schools output and from other information gained by the group, it is possible to say that also the management of pilot schools, although it fell into the higher average, haven't wholly appreciated the significance of financing the management. Employees that provide and control required economic data weren't able to recognise at first sight clear mistakes and faults and disrupted logical relationships in the provided data . The data analysis that are analysed in the third part of the report in detail, show the clear connection between economic prosperity and ability in gaining funds as well as the effectiveness of spending funds and practical abilities in financing management inside and outside the school.

When analysing the connection between VET management and financing effectiveness it's clear that the vocational school is a more demanding environment than, for example, primary or general secondary school. In the vocational school, it's necessary to ensure the operation of machine equipment , the difficult movements of materials and products takes place there, various resources enter into financing and they must be checked and computed specifically in bookkeeping. The degree (rate) of risks and mistakes in VET financing, and analogously at technical universities, is much higher than in others schools.

Solutions to problem No. 6:

To continuously add the knowledge of VET management and employees involved in VET management to the economics, operation and basis of financial management knowledge and to teach them using this knowledge.

To enable chosen employees (in the period of preparation for management function) to gain practical experience by a study visit in vocational schools with good management.

The criterion of the selection of VET management function should be the ability to manage the school in an economical and operational respect.

For headmasters and other management employees of vocational schools, regular schooling for the attainment and actualisation of economic knowledge and abilities should be arranged. Schooling should be diversified according to whether the employees have economic education or not. To focus on, for instance, economic analysis with its use in managing and economically ensuring of school operations.

Problem No. 7.

Normative VET financing

The Ministry of Education , Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Agriculture, from 1991 have gradually developed normative financing, aimed at the ensuring of financing objectiveness. In this context we should appreciate the effort of administrative bodies involved in schooling in distributing funds proportionally to results indicators (the real number of pupils in a given age group with taking into account other, in general, precisely defined results of the educational process). As for vocational schools, the criteria are: the division of teaching hours, extent of teaching plans , content of classrooms and so on. The effort for the sensitive normative distribution of funds may be demonstrated by the effort to take into account other conditions - specifications (correction of the normative, e. g. territory specifics , specifics connected with social or health difficulty of education and so on). Details can be found in Chapter 3.

In normative distribution organisation the Ministry as the creator and regulator of the normative takes over the highest position, and further with school administrations that put the finishing touches to the normative and apply it.

The stress is put on the comprehensibility of normative distribution and in-depth education of the normative users (the schools), involving the education focused on results of the method.

It is necessary to note that the normative of distribution means mostly the method of distribution. The real volume of funds is however determined by the State budget for the Ministry of Education, ratified by the Parliament . When using normative methods, besides the basic limit of volume funds of benefits and costs, the so called "mandatory" expenses must be taken into account as well. Those are expenses predetermined in special legal norms (most often they are salary claims determined by a salary tariff (scale wages), textbooks, teaching aids and so on).
The Ministry of Education , and in the previous period also the Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Agriculture shaped the normative by other recommendations, e. g. which tendencies are to be used as far as unclaimed parts of expenses are concerned, how to use the volume determined normatively in the course of school and fiscal year.

As for the normative distribution for VET, the following differences are distinguished: whether it is a private or state school, whether it is a secondary vocational school, higher vocational school, secondary vocational school or practical training centre. Furthermore, the normative differentiates that study subjects at SVS and STS be divided into expense groups. To get a full picture, the normative distribution of contributions to accommodation, school lunches and the normative character of contribution to disabled pupils must be mentioned.

When evaluating the normative method, we can note the indisputably positive gain of the method for the effective distribution and spending of funds in the VET field. In a normative activity of the Ministry of Education and school offices the positive thing is an effort to develop the method and application of the normative distribution in accordance with goals, which should be achieved in short-term time frame, which mostly amounts to a year. However, the development of a normative method in relation to longer-term, more strategical
goals cannot be evaluated with the same definite certainty. The main barrier has probably not been clearly worked-out, the long-term conception of VET , although the main goals, when we take into account long-term intentions for VET in the EU countries, are set by the Ministry of Education rather well. Headmasters of vocational schools have another opinion and they have pointed out that the proportion of funds distribution between general and vocational schools are gradually, and without no justification, disappearing , and the funds are more and more distributed to general

schools by normative. The consequence, they say, is the excessive number of pupils at gymnasia as compared with the diminishing number of pupils at vocational schools.

In this context, it is clear that the normative does not fulfil, and even for its character cannot fulfil the function of a real, budgetary "constructive" norm. It's only the normative with the function of "distribution", that helps only to a more objective distribution of funds, determined by another way, for the whole education system and vocational education as part thereof. Thus, the normative is not the one of minimum volume funding and is not the objective level of necessary funds, that must be covered by the State budget for VET.

The objectiveness of the normative method of financing depends upon many elements that it contains and to which its react and respond. With every non-involved element, the basic comparative and expressing ability is diminishing. The other advantage of the normative method is it's parameter's character which allows intentional determinations of these parameters according to actual situation or to the support of state policy goals.

However, foreign as well as our experiences reveal some negative sides of this way of financing. Mostly it is a war for students. If the funds are distributed only according to the number of pupils, the school is interested in gaining as many students as possible, often without regard to their prerequisites for studying.

The solution to problem No. 7.

When solving the problem of normative financing of VET we recommend:

q the object and regular updating of the normative prescription
q the binding of the formulating of the state budget with the normative
q the evaluation of normative financing not only according to number of enrolled students but also according to the number of graduates or, possibly, according to the number of
employed graduates

Furthermore, it is necessary to put down any inaccurate report on the number of pupils, consequences of the discrepancy between the school and fiscal year and errors of student number estimation in the new school year that follows.

Problem No. 8:

Remuneration of pedagogical workers (teachers, pedagogical staff)

Personal evaluation and salary supplements for managers are the most common possibilities of evaluating of a definite worker. Headmasters also have competition for this certain (time-limited) evaluating function. Controlling, inspection reports are focused on the performance of an individual or group of teachers. Evaluating reports processed in the course of the school year and at the end of the year are mostly concentrated on the evaluation of the performance of whole teams of teachers or vocational groups.

However, the mentioned forms of evaluation are not used completely adequately. The evaluation of teachers has, on the side of evaluators, the characteristic of passivity and not sufficient criticism focused on real performance features, working proficiency and liability to the school and educational interest. The managers in vocational schools do not grasp that evaluation need not be always conflict and unpleasant activity. Evaluation is not effective, and strength is not considered as a integral part of VET management by all VET participants. It follows that also for the participants who are evaluated, the evaluation cannot be objective feedback in which they are given important data about themselves and incentives for the corrections of their work.

Law. No. 143/1992 is used for salary estimation of VET employees. In private, parochial and higher VET it is Law No. 1/1990. The using of these legal measures in the environment where so many negative features can be found, diminishes the significance of these measures. The non-use of all possibilities which would be involved in a systematic approach of evaluation and mistakes made by evaluators, have a direct connection with the critical situation that climaxed with a teachers' strikes , affecting VET as well.

Although the salary funds in the State budget were earmarked, in the examined period, on the comparable level with all of the budgetary sphere and even in the years 1995 and 1996 the special funds preferring remuneration of teachers were involved, there has not been any change in the teachers' awareness and their strong convictions that they are remunerated insufficiently. The causes of this fact may be found in that:

q support aiming at the real improvement of teachers' salary conditions is coming into being after very long period of financial underestimation of teachers
q the policy of teachers' remuneration has not been clearly and for very long period formulated by the Ministry of Education, school offices and management of schools
q management of the Ministry of Education and management of vocational schools do not engage in bargaining with trade unions in time, underestimate the significance of the bargaining and postpone them from various reasons
q the technology of remuneration in education has not been coped with (managed) sufficiently, the devising of interior salary rules is missing
q managers of state vocational schools do not have sufficient knowledge about salary rules and very often they are short of at least general knowledge of budgeting funds and if they are not, they use them non-politically, often they create unnecessary stress by releasing alarming information about the lack of funds for the following period
q remuneration still has a character of novelty, managers do not have enough courage for actual differentiation according to real vocational performances
q the discussion on the proportion of tariff and non-tariff parts of the salary is not finished yet as well as the discussion on the suitability of using construction of a unique chart of salary tariffs in the whole budgetary sphere also in VET
q there are consistent doubts about involving funds gained from the so-called subsidiary incomes into the remuneration of teachers at state vocational schools
q extraordinary strengthening of salary funds for teachers was, in 1995, put into effect

only in the fourth quarter of the year, that caused the accumulation of their spending into the last two salaries in the year and other problems which was caused by insufficient "education", that would accompany this action

The solution to problem No. 8:

To keep, or possibly moderately increase the trend of development of salary funds on VET in the state budget which has been in existence since 1995. In VET, similar to other secondary education, implement the saving of a number of teachers and saved salary funds kept (or at least half of it) to increase the salaries. More than up to the present, differentiate the remuneration, not only according to the years taught but also according to performance, qualification, initiative and loyalty to VET.

At the level of the Ministry of Education but better at the level of the whole government, set the rules of teachers' remuneration development up to the year 2005. To make regular the negotiation between the state administration and teachers' trade unions. The initiative must be taken by the state administration. To try to come into agreement with trade unions on rules of salary development in a time frame of medium length and subsequently each year reach an agreement with trade unions on salary dynamics, linking it with the formulating of the state budget for following fiscal year.

To consider general economic education among all employees in VET. To increase the knowledge of school headmasters about salary rules and their application and about budgeting and using salary funds.

In connection with the recommendations for solving the fourth problem, to decentralize remuneration. To consider the abrogation of the present salary prescriptions used in education. The maximal level of salary would be, in the future, determined mostly by the providers of vocational schools. Only the minimal level of salary would be set for the whole state. The final amount of salary would be determined by the promoter on the proposals of a school headmaster. Thus the salaries would take into account many conditions, to which every school must comply. Salaries thus would be depend upon the VET's outcomes and a portion of each pedagogical worker on his attainment.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Conclusions from the analysis of the financing of the pilot schools

The number of pupils of the pilot schools did not present substantial changes in the observed period of the years 1992 – 1996. However, their structure changed a lot. The share of the students, especially in the extended studies grew, the share of the apprentices fell.

Although the number of the apprentices fell, the offer of the possible fields at the pilot schools grew. Therefore the average number of the apprentices of each branch is lower.

Importantly the number of "state" apprentices and their share grew in all fields.

The number of the staff of the pilot schools was on the approximately same level in the whole period.

Separate categories of the staff marked substantial changes. The number of teachers grew, the number of tutors, masters of apprentices and other employees including the employees in the economic sector of the pilot schools fell.

All the mentioned changes appeared especially at the integrated secondary schools.
In all categories of the staff except the teachers the number of the pupils related to one employee grew. The highest ratio is in all staff categories at the private schools.

In the financial sphere

q the total costs of the pilot schools grew, first of all due to the growth of the personnel costs
q the share of the personnel costs in the total costs of the pilot schools grew
q the share of the depreciation in the total costs of the pilot schools stagnated
q the receipts and incomes of the pilot schools fell because of the important fall of the receipts from the companies financing the studies of some pupils – the number of the so-called "sponsored pupils" fell considerably
q the share of the receipts and incomes in the total costs of the pilot schools fell and therefore the operational grant from the state budget grew

The problem of financing of the pilot schools did not figure in the enormous growth of the expenses but in the fall of the receipts and output first of all from the companies financing the pupils. The pilot schools tried to eliminate this gap in the output by the growth of the receipts from the productive work of the pupils and from the economic activities. This compensation was not enough and therefore the operational grant from the state budget had to be increased. Nevertheless the pilot schools had to reduce the growth of their costs in comparison with other types of schools.

The development of the material facilities of the pupils of the pilot schools is dependent on the school building. The share of the proper technological school machinery and equipment is very low. The situation of the depreciation of the equipment is very serious.

No important change was observed in the sphere of the school canteens in the pilot schools. The potential number of apprentices is at most of the pilot schools higher than the actual number of pupils in the branches.

Most of the pilot schools provide all the professional training or its major part in their own facilities.

3.2 The foreign experience

The public financing of the professional training and education is the main trend in many countries. This state support is especially important in the conditions of the structural uncertainty or insufficient capacity of the employers for the professional training.

Among the known weaknesses of public financing we can find the missing relation of the offer of education and the demand of employers, low adjustment and quality of professional training, high operational costs etc. The problem is not in the low level of financing of the professional education but in its excessive expansion. Many educational institutions prefer the offer to the real demand of the employers and therefore the qualification of their graduates is different from the needs of the labour market.

The most credible method for the growth in financing of the professional training in industrial countries and many developing countries is the establishment of the obligatory expenses on the professional preparation of the employers.

It is suggested to solve the problems of financing of the professional training by

q the support of the market power in this area
q the change of public educational institutions into private companies (privatisation of the public schools)
q public educational funds managed by employers
q vertical cooperation in financing (decentralization for the regional level)
q financing of the institutions of professional training according their its output

3.3 The problems of financing professional education in the Czech Republic

The contemporary problems of financing professional education in the Czech Republic can be characterized as the pressure on the growth of the expenses of the state budget and their not always effective expansion.

One of the main problems is the ineffective network of professional schools and excessive offer of the professional and educational possibilities. The optimisation of this network, the analysis of the level and effectiveness of the offered possibilities and rationalization of the educational offer is the solution to the problem. The standards of the implementation of changes remain the open problem. Our working team prefers the economic standards as the most important. According to our opinion the professional schools in the public sector with about 1000 pupils have good conditions for the future. In the private sector the schools with less pupils will dominate. We have different opinions on the number of careers provided at a public school with the mentioned capacity. Some of the members of our working team protest against the higher number of the careers and their big differences, some consider it to be a certain advantage.

Another important problem is the enormous number of the so-called "state pupils" in the professional careers. The working team is considering more possible solutions from the radical abolishment of this category of pupils, motivation of the companies to the change of the flow of money from the state budget. The members of the working team have different opinions on this problem. The representation of the Ministry of Labour and the Social Affairs (MPSV) rejects for many reasons the financing of professional training from the budget of his ministry, the other members of the team have a different opinion. The main reason of the MPSV representative is that this solution does not change anything and in addition the money for the professional training will go from the state budget by two different routes. The other members of the team think that the money should be given to customers and not to suppliers. In the case of the preparation of the so-called "state pupils" the school department is the supplier and the labour and social affairs department should be the customer.

The founders of the professional schools are not very diversified. There is a very low or no share of big companies, unions of employers and producers, chambers of commerce, churches, cities etc. The main responsibility for the professional education remains at the state institutions which is not optimal and effective.

The economic form of the professional schools is a typical Czech problem first in the sphere of schools for apprentices. Such schools have a complex character which means that both the theoretical and practical preparation of the pupils is provided by the school. From the view of the world it can be considered an exception with its advantages and disadvantages according to the type of the career and the location of the school. The professional schools have mostly the form of the institution dependent on state financial contributions which can be also the question of different opinions. We should also consider the increase of the number of public beneficial companies in the sphere of professional training.

It is comprehensible that the working team suggests a person with managerial skills to manage the professional school. This conclusion should influence also the selection of the headmasters and their further education.

The prescriptive financing of the professional education provides good outcomes both in foreign countries and the Czech Republic. But it does not mean that we are completely satisfied with the contemporary situation of financing. It is necessary to observe and modify the system of prescriptive financing, to connect it more with the state budget and in the future also with regional budgets.

It is also necessary to direct special attention to the remuneration of teachers including the rules, the amount of money and its use.

LEGISLATION

Jaromír KREJČÍ

Vladimír KAVAN
Miroslav KRÁLÍK
Ladislava STEINICHOVÁ
Jiří VOJTĚCH

INTRODUCTION

The Czech vocational education system has met significant changes in the last seven years. Significant development and changes have taken a place in the setting, where vocational education has had a dominant part, being supported by national concerns of the time and being relatively stabilised, and also traditional secondary technical schools (STS) with great prestige (compared with neighbouring states) but not following new trends.

The most relevant changes in vocational education can be characterised as such:

q schools have received considerable autonomy, which has allowed them to prepare their own teaching documents. As a consequence, the number of vocational branches has significantly increased.

q in spite of the fact, that the projects of vocational education standards had been elaborated, they haven't yet been officially accepted, and not even other rules (respecting the individuality of schools) of accreditation of teaching documents have been instituted

q incompletely solved rules concerning the registration of schools into the net of schools together with the unprecedented growth in the number of STS and Secondary Vocational Schoold (STS)

q despite the fact that relatively comprehensive conditions concerning the registration of schools have been enacted until now, they seem to be of little efficiency and little balance. The number of schools, especially in vocational education (but also in the area of multi-stage gymnasiums) is beyond the needs at present (and at least for the next 10 or 15 years).

q schools have reacted to the republic-wide change in the employment structure according to their abilities and with an unexpected vitality (aiming at maintaining themselves) but the structure of certain branches and groups of branches in the present offer of schools is unstable according to the developing labour market

q almost every school management has changed. Headmasters and positions in the top management of schools belong to key persons, and despite their salaries, which are unsatisfactory according to the average salaries, they have considerable responsibility and relatively low support of the system. This implies the demand for good teachers.

q a part of the new schools (but also a part of the already established schools, where some teacher have left) have engaged new but not always good teachers. As for the preparation (and the following education) of the teachers of vocational classes, there were no big changes. A (considerable) part of this teaching staff does not have another possibility of lecture residency in their own branch.

q the number of pupils in the coming population has decreased by approximately 20%, which has forced the management of some schools to acquire new pupils by improvement of educational offer attraction and quality of pedagogical work, but we can also see a decrease in the demands toward students and the lost of education quality q _ŠI has not had enough experts in vocational education. The possibility of co-ordination with them (as with external workers) was not allowed until the novel of the law on governmental administration and autonomous administration in education was stated.

q a lot of companies were established. Companies used to have to reimburse, above all, the practical part of vocational education according to the assigned quotas. These costs have actually been assumed by the state. Problems appear above all in the industrial branches (except those SVS, which are in possession of economically strong concerns) and in the demand of the masters of vocational education, whose salaries decreased following the lost of employer support.

q despite the considerable increase of the number of practical education workplaces (established by private subjects), the quality of vocational training is not always at the needed level. In contrary, the number of the traditional centres of practical education has dropped

q responsibility for so-called "apprentice education" was accepted by the Ministry of the Economy during 1992–1996. This enabled closer ties with entrepreneurial subjects, but it disabled the use the substantial capacity of SVS for co-ordinated development of the net of schools, e. g. in the area of study branches in STS or in the area of general education. The fact that the practice has made such a development necessary is confirmed with the rise of so-called "secondary integrated schools".

q a new institutional form of vocational education, the VOŠ – has arisen and a new hybrid form of vocational education – technical and economic lyceums – has been established

q the role of the partners close to vocational education is still not very significant. Activities of entrepreneurial groups and their representatives are perceptible more in the influence on the subject matter content, less in the support of certain branches of vocational education or in the support of the graduates in praxis.

q despite the improvement of equipment at a number of schools, the present economy of our country disallows principally positive interventions in the economical development of schools. This is why we can presuppose that professional equipment at schools will follow the present technical development with certain delay.

q these circumstances should be appropriately reflected in the legal rules of education

In spite of the fact that the majority of educational legal rules has been issued with new adjustments or considerably novelised (summary of these legal rules is mentioned in the appendix)in the last 6 years. Legal rules reacted only at a low rate to a lot of requests by schools. It could be also stated that despite the fact that they disallowed natural and logical development (e. g. development of ISŠ) in certain cases, in other cases (as every legal rule) they prevented undesirable excesses, which after a certain time were dissolved. The stabilising role of legal rules in the rash development of vocational education should not be a dominant one and should not become an obstacle to natural development. In view of the fact that the process of legal instruction enactment (especially the enactment of laws) is relatively time-consuming and it is influenced by different sides, the legal rules will always somewhat be in delay of the proposals arising in the area of investigations, schools and social partners.

The aim of this paper is to recommend some matter of fact adjustments in the area of law, which arise from the experiences of pilot schools and could be applied to the educational system as an innovation or an alternative of vocational school activities along with the establishment of certain legal rules in education.

1. THE EXPERIENCE OF PILOT SCHOOLS

a) After evaluation of the experience of the experiment at pilot schools, the theme of the terminology in the area of curriculum and its enactment has been included, because the terminology being used in pilot schools somewhat differs from the present usage of the concept.

b) A significant problem is the obsolete arrangement of the system of professional and vocational branches. One of the features of the irregularity of this system is, for example, the "similarity" of professional and vocational branches and arising from this the significant number of VOTEC branches. The system, having been approved in pilot schools and elaborated in VÚOŠ, has been oriented towards the establishment of a so-called basic curriculum (meaning educational standard) for a certain number of areas and to the completion of this document by the individual school – into the so-called school curriculum (meaning educational programme).

c) One of the most considerable differentiating elements in the organisation of the education in pilot schools is the possibility of postponing the choice of definite vocational training and the educational level for one year by the establishment of the universal first class. It is a result of the evaluation of pilot schools and the establishing this practice into the school seems to be pertinent. The pilot schools recommend that this universal first class should be established for certain cluster of branches, which are relative concerning their content – for example, for the so-called educational area, a wider extent only as an exception. The "graduate" of the primary school chooses the direction after primary school and after the universal first class. This corresponds to the gradual specialisation after universal start of studies and at least partially, it can help to solve the problem of the branches, where one year in two-year branches and two years in three-years branches are not enough, and some general technical subjects could be included into the first universal class.

d) Where the modular education is established, the problem of uneven distribution of work time arises during the school year. The modular education arrangement requires the uneven work requirement for individual teachers, who exceed the compulsory educational work (stated by the government provision No. 503/1991 Sb.) during certain periods or do not fulfil it during other periods.

e) Modular education presupposes that the education modules acquired during the studies at secondary school can be supplemented during whole life learning. Pilot schools recommend providing certificates after the acquisition of the modules. The certificates can be complemented later during whole-life learning with other acquired modules. People build a structured documentation of their education and the path of this education. It is a very clear situation for the employers; they know about the acquired education or the education still required respectively. This documentation of the acquired education modules would only supplement the regular reports. Besides the certificates, it is also necessary to solve the system of module marking, so that it would be possible to include other modules into the system according to their development and the requirements of social partners.

f) The required experience of the pilot schools is the application of the pupil's projects into learning. Pupils do not only learn terms and definitions but they also learn to solve problems similar to problems in practical life. It is suitable when the pupil's projects are completed with the final project, which is recommended as an compulsory part of the completion of study and it is reflected in the classification in the Maturita or final exam.

g) Phare pilot schools are approving the system of educational programmes with more levels (grades of the acquired education) and with more points of departure, which enable the stopping of the education in lower classes with certain qualifications. It corresponds to the Strategical Study recommendations, which are based on the experience of developed countries. The present system of education usually allows only one final departure and the points of departure from the lower classes are not utilised at a significant rate (or they are not even allowed).

h) The latent problem of pilot schools (and other schools the same) is the question of "state apprentices" and the matter, which is connected with it, e. g. legal obligation to the sponsor, financing (above all) the VOTEC training, closer interest of social partners in VOTEC. It can be said that the shift of responsibility for the preparation of pupils in vocational branches (from the state concerns or the top management of former VHJ to the present situation of "apprentice education", which is financed by the educational resort (by the state), have not been solved yet and it troubles both the present SVS and the pupils of vocational branches with the uncertainty of their perspectives (which need not be always favourable in certain economical areas). Above all in the comparison with the pupils of STS or Gymnasia, the pupil of vocational branch is in an certainly unfair position (until he)she becomes a "state apprentice"). Also the participation of social partners in the establishment of curricular content, the expression of needs from the view of the labour market and participation in the additional education of pedagogical workers does not seem to be sufficient.

2. DISCUSSION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STRATEGICAL STUDY ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

One of the initial parts of the Strategical Study was the evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of the system of vocational education during the period until 1990. To compare and discuss the subjects we consider it pertinent to mention them, because they have determined a lot of study suggestions and they are in disagreement with many defenders of the former certainty and simplicity.

In the 80s, in the time of a centrally directed economy with restricted mobility of labour staff, the OVP system was effective with providing the preparation before finding a job according the principle of "one for all". In the framework of this aim of different kinds of schools and in the context of a directive economy the acceptable level was attained. From the formal point of view, the labour staff in the _R and SR is highly qualified. The examples of a high rate of individual success of students and apprentices are very often quoted. The scheme of students' qualifications is simple. "Maturita" is highly regarded as an admission qualification at university. A vocational certificate grants the privilege to work in certain professional branch.
In contrast, some disadvantages are mentioned:

q The different aims of the STS and SVS implicitly assume that the jobs at factories be divided into two different groups. But there is a wide scale of vocations in reality and they require a different amount of knowledge and skills.
q Schools usually specialise in one cluster of branches. They have had little opportunity to extend the programme offer and increase the offer to students or satisfy various local needs.
q To the contrary, specialised secondary schools, usually determined by the former employer, takes away the opportunity to choose following school and job from the students.
q The system requires students to decide about their specialisation at the age of 14, when they are too young and insufficiently informed. Efforts to increase flexibility and postponing the choice of vocational branch has resulted in many experiments, but basically they didn't change vocational branches. Parents and the locality have the biggest influence on vocational choice.

- q As soon as the vocational branch is chosen, there is relatively little possibility to change. The rigid secondary educational system with accurate defined teaching syllabi and vocational branches keeps students from smooth changes between technical, vocational or general education courses or even between two branches within one school.
- q There is little post-secondary education except VŠ here. Requir of such courses reduces the opportunities of many pupils at secondary schools to proceed to higher education and vocational preparation.
- q There are relatively few opportunities of whole life learning.

The former system conception:

- q the system served primarily the companies, less the individuals, and it was adapted to supply the labour market
- q relatively ineffective or inflexible
- q not very closely connected to the needs of the changing labour market
- q from the financial point of view, unsustainable in the present transient form

The basic principles of the Strategical Study aimed at removing the defects of the former system of vocational education and preparation and to increase the effectiveness from the societal and economical viewpoint. Now, let us try to evaluate individual principles mentioned in the Strategical Study Phare, particularly the viewpoint of the necessity of legislative provisions and their implementation in the praxis as the case may be.

P1: more general and widely comprehensive education. The employment and the market economy require from the individuals a higher level of skills, adaptability and flexibility. They are usually the consequences of more qualitative general education and better pedagogical methods, operating with students' activity, inquisitiveness and responsibility – in contrast to traditional passive comprehension.

Ad P1: This requirement is considered as a supporting principle of the contribution of existing branches education programs and is included in the requirements of the basic curriculum. The requirement of widely comprehensive education is real as well. Its implementation is a matter of proposed education programmes.

q This requisition does not require legislative provisions.

P2: postponing the moment, when an individual has to decide about his/her future vocation, especially about the area, which has to be chosen in the course of his/her studies. This is why the widely comprehensive pre-vocational preparation of students of 15–16 years of age is needed. It would be followed by the vocational education.

Ad P2: This requirement is very topical despite the establishment of the ninth class at the primary school. It is caused by the fact that pupils often do not have knowledge regarding certain work activities, they have no opportunities to test required skills, in other words, they are not able to assess their own abilities to pass the more demanding study preparation. Usually they have some notion of the character of the profession to which they wish to devote themselves. In such cases, it is very purposeful to enable them to test their own abilities during the first year within the preparation including several branches. We don't presume it is necessary to draft such a first class as an obligatory one for the whole system of vocational education, but it should exist because of the pupils, who take interest in it, above all at the integrated schools, and it should afford a choice from all the offers of schools or only from a certain part – from branches, where such a cluster is advantageous.

> This requirement requires legislative provisions, which allow the acceptance of pupils into the common first class and to create such a class.

P3: create the possibility to change vocational direction (training branch) owing to personal reasons or vocational reasons, so that the time lost is as little as possible.

Ad P3: This requirement may be implemented in the study beginning with the offer of the common first class and following the possibility of choice, which cannot be connected with the time lost, when the branch is similar and if a pupil is able to complete the required education usually involving the differential examination.

q This requirement does not place requirements on the legislative provisions.

P4: The possibility to leave the school at the age of 16, 17 or 18 with a qualification or with a certification of the school completed, including the provision of possibility continuing in long-distance VOTEC education.

Ad P4: This possibility implies considerable interventions into the structure of branches, so that completion of the second or third class constitute a purposeful educational unit. This principle is possible particularly in the area of vocational branches. Pupils could get a vocational certificate like graduates of two-years vocational branches. Similarly in the area of STS receiving the certificate of secondary vocational education graduation. But there is a question here, whether we could establish this principle generally, because there is interest in education in the _R and the social situation of pupils does not force them to interrupt their study in such a way. Interruption of study is usually a consequence of a pupil's disinterest in education followed by bad notes.

> In the case, that the present legislation disallows the implementation of branches with completion of lower classes, legislative provisions are advantageous.

P5: increase the flexibility of the vocational training and qualification system, so that it is possible to react to the changing needs of the labour market and to the needs of students. One of the significant forms ensuring the flexibility is the modular system.

Ad P5: Flexibility of the system, especially using models, is an accepted need in general. The education law is conveniently arranged to apply the module-framed educational programmes, but some issues regarding their practical use have yet to be solved.

This requirement requires legislative adjustment of complementary laws and edicts.

P6: creating the co-ordinated structure of post-secondary education, so that everybody has the opportunity to widen his/her own choice of vocation through study at a higher level.

Ad P6: This requirement is not connected with the pilot school experiment, but it is has been implemented in practice.

P7: initiate a system of whole- life education

Ad P7: This requirement is not connected with the pilot school experiment, its implementation has not been yet sufficiently solved and it is a long term objective

P8: ensure stronger interest of employers and other social partners in preparation of vocational education at both the national and local level.

Ad P8: Whereas at the national level there has been no success in incorporating the employers into the process of preparation of vocational education, because their organisations at the national level do not work sufficiently, especially in the area of uneven interests, the local connection between schools and companies is very good and the employers are incorporated into the process of educational programme improvement

q This requirement cannot be solved only by the means of legislation changes, these changes could be subsequently required.

P9: Ensure that the provided training programmes correspond to the future needs .of companies and the economy. This means a reduction in the number of programmes providing manipulative skills training and an increase in the area of services, business, banking and insurance, where the demand for manpower will increase.

Ad P9: Liberal approaches to the creation of educational programmes and to the educational offer and to its dependence on the interests of pupils has enabled the very quick implementation of the mentioned requirements

q This requirement does not require legal amendments.

P10: Provide the apprentices who can become multi-qualified workers in their future jobs with the basic training. This is in contrast to the number of existing vocational programmes which are planned only for narrowly specialised skills.

Ad P10: Training programmes of multi-qualified workers originate rarely, but more often it is a matter of widely comprehensive training. The width of the professional profile is not restricted by any legislative provisions.

q This requirement does not require legal amendments.

P11: support the employers in ensuring more demanding vocational training in the workplace according to national rules and standards.

Ad P11: This is solved with the possibility of establishing workplaces with practical education where the theoretical preparation operates under SVS, or by establishing non-state SVS where all the training is closely connected to the workplace in the factory. Both the cases must respect the approved educational programmes. More complicated is the requirement of supporting the employer's programme implementation. One way of supporting is the possibility of utilising the work capacity of pupils and the state contributions to the non-government SVS.

q This requirement does not require legal amendments.

P12: provide basic vocational training prior to entrance into the vocation only when it is improved effectively in the SVS and when it is financed by the companies.

Ad P12: This requirement is a little bit contrary to the preceding requirement, but in principle it requires the reimbursement of the training by the companies. Things have developed into the general acceptance of the state trainees conception and we can hardly expect any principle change. We can see a good trend in the reduction of the number of pupils in SVS, which is caused by both a decrease in population and a decrease in the interest in SVS training. It concerns particularly girls, they used to be under the pressure of "direction numbers" - they had to study at branches they were not interested in. It concerned also the pupils who were - due to the "direction numbers"- restricted from study at STS or Gymnasium. The basic solution of the problem of state trainees is a political issue in the case that the decision that legal amendments be necessary, but it is not purposeful to propose them now.

q This requirement does not require legal amendments.

P13: propose the vocational education programmes with as many common subjects as possible, so that the flexibility is ensured by a higher number of pupils in the class.

Ad P13: Phare pilot school curricula are consistently proposed with the same syllabi of general education subjects within the schools and within the groups of branches or subjects of vocational base. It is a matter of methods which should not be solved in a legislative manner.

q This requirement does not require legal amendments.

Besides these basic requirements there are some additional suggestions in the Strategical Study. Because they are elaborated in detail, we do not comment on them, we only mark the legal amendments.

a) to implement the transient class with the purpose of increasing the general education of students, providing them with key skills, preparing them for entrance into vocation education and training system and into the vocation, and providing them with a greater amount of information to help them to decide about their future vocations.

Ad a: It has no purpose to consider such a transient class because of the establishment of a ninth class in primary schools. The mentioned requirements could be performed within the above-mentioned "common first class".

b) Alternative possibilities of higher education should be provided to the graduates of Gymnasia through post-secondary programmes. The students of Gymnasia could get more education within higher post-secondary programs in ordinary education. Other graduates should have the possibility of taking part in shorter post-secondary programmes corresponding to the vocation they chose.

Ad b: The problems of the present higher schools shows us that post-secondary education with only one form (higher education as it is enacted) is insufficient. This is why a shorter (1 or 2 years) preparation is required, because it would keep the quality of higher schools with longer preparation. It requires legal amendments.

c) Vocational training is usually relatively expensive. Providing this training in small specialised schools is not the most efficient way of how to utilise expensive special equipment, pedagogical staff or other means. Because of a decrease in the number of students in SVS certain schools have only half the pupils. From this point of view attention should be paid to the creation of local and regional training centres; probably in co-ordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and with employers, which is a model used in EU countries. These centres should be able to offer vocational training in a large scale of professional skills. In the beginning, a lot of SVS could be modified into such centres.

Legislative amendments are required.

d) Bringing SVS and STS closer together is recommended as efficient. New united vocational schools would provide a large scale of vocational training programs, which open opportunities to students, and vocational branches which would better satisfy the demand of local employers. Bigger schools would be more efficient as for the future costs. Other reasons for the creation of such schools is the possibility of postponing the choice of vocation and the possibility of more flexible entrance into branches at SVS and STS.

It is being experimentally implemented as so-called "Integrated secondary schools". Anyway legislative amendments are required.

e) It is necessary to emphasise the flexible programmes within the whole system. The system structure characterised with the different study duration in ordinary education and increased possibilities in vocation would minimise or remove a lot of inflexible features and weak places of the present model. But the other elements of flexibility and new orientation may be derived only from the changes in curriculum, programme structure, pedagogical methods and attitudes of people who act within the system.

Ad e: Everything began to develop with the creation of branched and stacked fields. Their further development was halted. Another form of flexible programme is the modular education program. This form requires legislative amendments.

Legislative amendments are required.

f) The recent syllabi have been set in the whole Republic for narrowly defined professional profiles. Recently, many of these demarcations have widened. This study recommends the more widely defining of professional profiles because of the preparation of a multi-qualified labour staff. Profiles of the VOP could be constructed from a relatively small number of vocational groups which could integrate the basic key skills. Basic key skills are the basic, adaptable skills which are necessary for almost every vocation and successful learning. They would be integrated into certain programmes and the curricula of secondary schools (both OVP and Gymnasia) should emphasise them.

Ad f: The need of widely comprehensive programmes has already been discussed. This matter cannot be solved only by legislative amendments, it must be continuously discussed with the participating subjects.

g) The establishment of the subject "Introduction into the World of Labour" in the first class is recommended. This subject should include a number of work activities and their practice, and it could be connected to re-qualification programs of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Ad g: It has been established in pilot schools, it does not require legislative provisions.

h) The curriculum structure should correspond to the requirement of increasing the share of general education and with the requirement of postponing the moment of the vocational choice. It should also provide the base for the training of a multi-qualified labour staff. Requirements of the flexibility and standards will be implemented by the proposal of new training branches of new qualifications. The proposal of curricular projects, which aims at new qualifications, could be based on national rules, which would satisfy both the national and the local needs. Every STS would decide about its own curricular projects which are composed from the obligatory subjects and the blocks of voluntary subjects. The choice of individual subjects would depend on the needs of local companies and their interests and the abilities of individual students.

Ad h: This principle has been basically proved in the curriculum of Phare pilot schools in the form of a so-called basic (national) curriculum, which is an educational standard. This curriculum also includes a larger part of general education. Decisions about the arrangement of curricular projects and a large part of voluntary and selective subjects are already possible at present.

Legislative amendments are required. They should consist in legislative enactment of the basic curriculum or the curricular frame as a standard.

i) The general rules and the subjects established on the national level would be prepared by selected groups of teachers, representatives of employers and social partners. Individual programmes would be included in the competencies of relevant schools co-operating with local companies, other schools in the relevant area and with school boards.

Ad i: Legislative amendments are not necessary. It is being carried out.

j) Following the restructuring of the OVP system, new training branches, new curricula and new evaluation demands will appear. Teachers will take a major part of the responsibility for these changes, which will be established regarding the local conditions.

Legislative amendments are required. They should formulate the increased authority and responsibility of schools.

k) The development of the vocational training will call for new tools, equipment, evaluation forms, pedagogical aids including the application of new pedagogical technologies, e. g. education using computers, open education and long-distance education. One of the areas where the teachers need intensive support is the inspection which should have a more supportive than repressive, regulative or coercive character.

Legislative amendments are required. They should specify a supportive function of inspections.

According to these principles the project of Phare programme evaluation by the "Phare pilot schools experiment" was prepared. This experiment has been organized on the base of the extensive selection procedure. In the second round of the selection the task of schools was the elaboration of vocational education and training project with the aim of how the schools wanted to conceive the preparation of pupils in the framework of the conclusions and recommendations of the Phare Strategical Study.

When the selection of the schools was completed, methodical solution of the all questions was prepared within the co-operation between VÚOŠ and selected schools. It was a basic idea that it was not an experiment of VOTEC training implementation prepared in the centre, but an experiment which gives the schools freedom only with basic preconditions. This means that in the framework of the Phare programme not only one common model has been proved, but according to the Strategical Study a "scale of alternative changes" has been created. It allows the origin of various projects under the condition of their direction towards the aims supposed and recommended by the Phare study.

Schools have been allowed to propose, project and implement their own proposals of educational programmes and their arrangement into the form of a school curriculum. One of the basic conditions was to keep the basic curriculum as a standard, which guarantees the implementation of the basic state requisitions on the educational level in the area of general educational and basic VOTEC elements and in the area of the key skills (the basic adaptive skills, which are necessary in almost every vocation and for a successful education).

The basic point of the education programmes' preparation was the idea of the "complex gradually orientation of education and training". One of the more expressive thoughts of the Phare programme was therefore the common first class – because it creates the choice of the following education path from the point of view of both the choice of a profession and the level of education.

It was recommended to project the branches with wide profiles, which would allow the preparation of multi-qualified workers, though with lower specialisation, and to enable the specialisation in a more suitable way by the selection of subject content (modules) or subjects than by the form of fixed directions, which do not allow reaction to the changing demands of the labour market.

Schools have been allowed to decide, whether they want to project the education in the usual subject way or by using the modular arrangement.
Even if the basic precondition was to follow the intentions of Phare Strategical Study, it was not an obligation to implement all the requirements. Anyway, some of the requirements
has been established as non-omittable:

q the proposal and implementation of the model, which enables the development of wider professional skills, the integration of key skills, the understanding of the theoretical base for the whole group and the possibility of choice during education
q respect of the proposed basic curriculum, which expresses the common parameters of preparation
q creation of the possibility of postponing the choice of definite VOTEC branch and)or the choice of two levels of preparation (professional, vocational)
q to project the content of VOTEC preparation in the first class in the form of "introduction to the world of work" – the pupils prove their abilities and skills for the ensuing educational path, along with establishing the possibility of at least one point of departure during the preparation

- to ensure the preference of the preparation of contractually obligated pupils in vocational branches
- preparation of wider profiled workers

3. DISCUSSION ON CORRESPONDING RECOMMENDATIONS OF OECD REPORT

The OECD Report has been created recently and in contrast to the Phare strategic study in an absolute general and is much more widely focused on the whole educational system and even from the general view of human resources development. Also the view of OECD is mostly based on principles that ensure economical growth and growth of living standards, which altogether leads to preferring the labour-preparation approach and suppressing the development of pupils' personality and development corresponding to their interests and needs.

The basic report prepared for the OECD in its generality could not include in the whole account problems of experimental confirmation in Phare pilot schools. Even the area of professional training is just one part of the educational systems there, to which the main attention is not paid. Even worse could be from this view the report from examiners, where only smaller chapter is dedicated to the area of professional training (which is in our country by far the most important part of higher education) and all other parts are analysed mostly from the view of the general educational process.

Bearing in mind these reasons, we are going to focus our attention on the chapter (already mentioned) on VOTEC education and we are going to analyse the recommendations, although they will not be often mentioned explicitly, concluded from this chapter and it is suitable to refer to the relationship with the question of professional training legislation. Taking into account the type of chapter and reasons mentioned above, we will consider analysis of this material and recommendations contained as a source of information about the needs of influence on future development. We do not mention unambiguous conclusions about its need to be included into the legislative body.

A) The free choice of educational career and development of the number of pupils of STS in contrast with SVS that corresponds to trends in OECD countries.

ad A) This result is considered to be a very important recommendation to respecting the principles mentioned above, especially in the arranging of legislation. The goal is to rationalise the net and increase interest in some fields by economical and informational tools preserving these principles.

B) The lack (non-existence) of educational standards system is considered to be a big insufficiency.

Ad B) Within the framework of the Phare pilot schools' experiment, the system of educational standards declared as basic for the national curriculum is being evaluated. It would be apt to prepare legislature for using this system. These standards include a general educational part, key-abilities and a basic professional part for 20 types.

C) It is necessary to work on the consolidation of providing the educational service and improve its quality. It is necessary to overcome the institutional barriers among schools and rationalise the provision of the same educational offer of similar schools, making vertical and horizontal mobility possible.

Ad C) In the corresponding part of the experts' a report of the pilot school experiment in correspondence with rationalisation by creation of an integral institution is mentioned. The offer of educational and professional programmes enables the attainment of horizontal permeability without major problems either from the pupils' view or from schools' view. Rationalising the net requires legislative background to enable the founding of schools that will integrate the educational offer of SVS and STS.

D) Examiners think, that in our country more emphasis is placed on the modernisation of recent content on individual schools than on the development of methods and institutions for change in content of education in the form of an ongoing process in the system as a whole. Providing that the goal would be to avoid the situation, where headquarters would be flooded by requests to approve educational programmes, then it would be necessary to implement a change from the control of inputs to the control of outputs. But this would require reaching an agreement on the content in the list of qualifications, educational standards and professional norms. The emphasis on educational programmes misdirects attention from educational methods. The abilities and approaches of the pupils and the way in which they use the knowledge in praxis is more dependent on the manner of organization of the learning process than on the prescribed content of education. This is why emphasis should be placed on integral forms of learning.

Ad D) The examiners' report creates the impression, that the activity of VÚOŠ as an institution dealing with process of changes in the content of education it was neglected (see for example the statement that the key role in curricular development was played by VÚP). It is clear the devising of a system of professional norms and list of qualifications in co-operation with social partners is a much too long-term matter, with regard to the fact that social partners are not sufficiently consolidated and that existing partners have so far not had sufficient interest in the question of professional training. Probably it will be necessary not to abandon the present control of educational programmes and at the same time to strengthen the influence of VÚOŠ in co-operation with delegates of employers on the suggested content. Also the matter of transmission of experience and influencing the process of learning are being verified on the sample of pilot schools. In this sense it will be suitable to prepare a legislative proposal.

E) The team of examiners was surprised by the insufficient engagement of delegates of employers towards the creation of a curriculum of national importance. At the same time it was clear that these delegates were not prepared for the fulfilment of this task. This is why we recommend making use of connections of schools with social partners on the local level. The final task should be the creation of an institutional infrastructure for the co-operation of social partners with delegates from the school sphere.

Ad E) Contacts between schools and delegates of employers in relationship with the creation of educational programmes are quite usual. The question is whether it is necessary to project this co-operation to legislature or whether to solve this contact in another area (for example participation of delegates in final exams). With regard to the independence of the employers' sphere on school legislature it cannot be considered to be suitable and it will be probably more necessary to create good conditions for this connection in the school legislation.

F) The team of examiners suggests moving from a school initiative based strategy to the strategy of development of regional nets, that connect the system of professional training with jobs. Co-ordination of their activity should be done at the regional level. At the central level it should be the rationalisation of service providing quality control by creating standards and approving qualifications with the aim of making them compatible with the EU.

Ad F) Development of regional nets for these intentions is quite a complicated matter. It seems that it could be co-ordinated from the part of the labour office, using their counselling centres for job choice. The creation of further legislatively established bodies does not seem to be useful.

G) It is necessary to ensure coherence among the systems of professional education of young people, re-qualification training and further adult education, the best way is to integrate these subsystems.

Ad G) Separation of these systems is not only a matter of control by various ministries, but mostly the question of various financial support. Examiners declare that further adult education is a question of money. It is true, that traditional education while employed, which is a matter of the school, is gradually decreasing. This is because, the preparation of the "graduates" from primary school in this form is not in needed, because the majority of young people also continue on through higher education and do not need to prepare for their studies while working. The co-operation of these three mentioned systems could be implemented, especially when it will be possible to found appropriate local or regional centres of training, which are suggested in the Strategic study of Phare. The basis could become the already established Vocational Training Centres, that have been already established with this intention. Legislative amendments are necessary, not explicitly but providing in the area of institutional forms so much freedom, that these centres could legally arise.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The stabilisation and clarification of the terminology in the curriculum area and its legal enactment

A brief analysis of the question:

The reason for including this point into the report is the fact that the pedagogical terminology used in Phare VET pilot schools' experiment contain a lot of new matters, which have not been included in the legal rules. They have been neither included nor clarified in legal rules as basic terms (e. g. vocational course, curricular project, curse syllabus). It is obvious that several elements of pedagogical documentation have not yet been specified, respecting the development in this area (e. g. school curriculum). There is also the demand to clarify new terms, because they are connected with new phenomena in our educational practice (e. g. education standard, education programme, module).

Recent practice demonstrates that VOTEC has already adopted certain terms, which are being used with relatively stabilised meanings and with relatively few differences. Other terms are being discussed. Some of them are being used very often but without any ambiguous meaning.

Despite the long discussion, some of the terms in certain parts of VOTEC seem to remain without ambiguous definition and without the possibility of legislative enactment.

Among the terms, which are listed in the legal rules and used with relatively clear meaning (or with differences in detail only), the following basic terms seem to be indisputable: education (vzd_lání), educational process, education (výchova), curricular documents (with the meaning: basic pedagogical documents), professional course, vocational course, targeted field, vocational branch, branch cluster (group of branches), graduate's profile, curricular project, course syllabus, vocational (or professional respectively) branch characteristic, education form, education level, Ľ

Besides these terms, there are also terms, which are being used by the professionals but have yet to be recorded:

q educational programme, model educational programme
q educational standard (standard in education), professional standard, evaluation standard
q group subjects

q curriculum, planned curriculum, attained curriculum, implemented curriculum, basic curriculum, school curriculum, curriculum frame
q educational module, module descriptor
q linear forms, graduating forms, branching forms, graduating branching forms
q group branch, educational fields
q level of educational process, educational level, L'

Conclusions and recommendations

Considering that the sorting and the correct interpretation of the terms is important for the creation of future legal norms, because the meaning of these terms must be indisputable and must be based on sufficiently common use, we recommend for the purposes of future education act to add the following basic terms to the terms, which are being commonly used, to achieve a consensual definition of these terms:

q educational level (which is explicitly used in other legal norms)
q educational programme
q educational standard
q educational module

For the purposes of the rules with lower legal power (especially the decree on secondary schools or the decree on the system of branches respectively):

q group branch
q or educational field respectively

We to recommend the removing of the term curricular documents from the educational act (this term should not be defined as it has been recently but it could be used as a common expression of curricular or other documents necessary for education) and to substitute it with the term educational programme (complemented with the specification of the appropriateness of the educational programme – branch title, branch characteristic, graduate's profile, curricular projects or modular curricular projects, syllabi or (educational) modules, and the basic, most important and essential conditions for the start and the implementation of education). The term educational programme refers to the relevant VOTEC branch.

Despite the fact that professionals use the term educational standard in many ways, we recommend adopting the term educational standard in the legislation as a specification of requirements, which are placed by the state upon the VOTEC system and upon the individual educational programmes in the area of aims and contents (or other aspects respectively).

We recommend connecting the term educational level with the meaning of certain level of attained education as it is being used, e. g. secondary VOTEC, fully secondary VOTEC etc.

We recommend connecting the term education module with the description of a certain compact part of the subject matter content, which also includes further appropriateness (from aims and to evaluations).

Educational fields is a considerably general category for the description of the similar quality of as the present clusters of branches. The classification of educational fields is caused on the one hand by differences in educational aims and characteristics of VOTEC content complexes, and on the other hand, the relative branches (clustered in one educational field) are similar as for the vocational component.

4.2 The question of the classification and the structure of branches

A brief analysis of the question:
The present system of branches is included in decree No. 354/1991 Sb., in the version of later rules as an independent annex. This annex is divided into sections A-G. Section A contains the professional branches at SVS, B contains branches at Gymnasia, C contains professional branches at STS and conservatories, D contains branches of extended education, E contains three parts: I. three-year vocational branches, II. abolishing the branches of health service/males, health service/females, III. Two-year vocational branches, section F contains education at schools with their own educational programme (commercial schools, vocational schools, commercial academies, hotel schools, family schools), section G contains the system of the clusters of vocational branches and the vocational branches in vocational centres.

This state is unsatisfactory owing to many reasons.

The number of new and formally correct branches with appropriate statistical code is absent in the register of the network of schools, because this decree cannot be easy novelised. The branches at private schools which largely use their own (approved curricular documents) are not mentioned in the annex at all. There are differences between the official data produced by the Institute for Information in Education according its own statistical investigations and the data in the register of professional and vocational branches in the Ministry of Education.

Along with it, it is evident that the system of professional and vocational branches separated two big clusters of schools - STS and SVS (and both of them separated from Gymnasia). Several branches have been created recently. Because of their character, they cannot be included into one or another cluster; and the branches in Phare pilot schools are one of the demonstrative examples.

As another consequence there is the rigid connection between individual branches and every kind of school - vocational branches have been assigned to SVS, other vocational branches to U_ilišt_ (Vocational Centre), other professional branches to STS.

This differentiation between both subsystems which has increased, after the shifting of competencies for apprenticeship education to the Ministry of Economy in 1992, by the differentiating of institutive functions of both the Ministry of Education (STS) and the Ministry of Economy (SVS). This situation has become so unsustainable that the imaginary boundaries of both the subsystems have been broken by secondary integrated schools. In this case, the integration has meant the combination of the educational offer from the subsystem of vocational branches and from the subsystem of professional branches (STS). One of the most frequented cases has been the complementation of the educational offer of SVS with the professional branches from the subsystem professional branches of STS. There have been also reverse cases (STS including vocational branches). A shift in the institutional responsibility for so-called apprentice education to the Ministry of education could facilitate the practical solving of this situation.

These circumstances indicate that the system of branches which is a component of decree No. 354-1991 Sb., does not correspond with the present situation because of its structure and because of its incompleteness, and it should be partially changed. It looks that after several years of rash development of the system of branches (also the school network), the time has come to make clear the structure of branches in vocational education after the solid evaluation of the situation, and to establish the generally acceptable basic principles of this structure, which would ensure its long term stabilisation and make it more cohesive. First attempts have already been made. They were aimed at removing excessive specialisations and duplications. The system of branches still contains several different variants, which would not be bad, if they would not contain very big differences in the conception of branches (from classical branches such as gardener, communications technology, typesetter over the branches of the commercial academy, hotel school until the various scale of branches in the area of entrepreneurship in branches, management in areas).

Despite the present relaxation of the system of branches the Phare pilot schools' professional branches cannot find a corresponding position, which would enable them to keep their universality in the beginning, specialisation in the end and the possibility of different points of departure of graduates with different levels of attained education. The right reason for the certain incompatibility between Phare branches and the classical system of branches is deeply rooted, according to our opinions, in the different structure of the basic elements of both systems. All of the education programmes are set as a unit in the system of branches – the curricular documents of all the branches are set from the course syllabi into classical curricular projects expressed in the number of lessons. The basis of certain Phare pilot schools are the educational modules. If they are usefully arranged, they are as clear as the classical system, but the universality of their number enables use in a number of other branches and this makes enables the creation of common bases of taught subjects. The preparation of the sufficient amount of (educational) modules and arrangement into convenient groups with different levels of departure points would be a corresponding substitution for the present professional and vocational branches. Creation of the education module arrangement in the vocational education system is very elaborate and will collide with the previous relatively problemless application of classical branches.

But it looks as if this problem cannot be solved only by the reconstruction of the branch system (it does not matter how much it should be improved), but the demanded effect will be attained with the adjustment to other considering legal provisions (above all decree No. 354/1991 Sb., on secondary schools, in the area of educational paths, decree No 10/1997 Sb., on the acceptance of pupils and other applicants to state secondary schools in the issue of the acceptance into the universal class and obviously also in act No. 29/1984 Sb. - the educational act, above all as regards the possibility of attaining certain education through various manners of education). Nevertheless the programme primary regards the current annex of decree No. 54/1991 Sb., on secondary schools related to the system of branches. This decree should be amended after elaboration of the new educational act.

Conclusions and recommendations

Proposed changes could concern:

a) the partial solution of the present coexistence of the classical system of professional and vocational branches

b) acceptation of the existence of both the classical and the modular arrangement according with the Strategical Study recommendation and the experience of pilot schools; possibility of the existence of different educational paths and different forms of educational programme arrangements

Because it is more convenient to accept variant b), we propose:

q excluding the unused vocational and professional branches from the network
q creating a more stable structure of the system of preparation branches based on so-called group branches. There are two approaches to the system of creating group branches. Both of them emphasise wider possibilities of graduates' application in praxis with regard to the wider profiling of group branches.

According to the first of them, the single group branches which are similar to each other (concerning the aims, content, equipment demands and staffing) will be included into the cluster with the title "group branches". These group branches are characterised by relevant education standards. This means a requirement to the general educational process and the key skills corresponding to the appropriate educational level and requirements to the vocational education corresponding to the fields and the appropriate level of education. The group branches which serve to attain the full secondary vocational educational level or higher vocational education are not characterised by the professional standards, because the profiles are too wide and cannot be definitely specified by the description of activities.

The second approach supposes the creation of the group branch system structure based on wider conceived graduates' profiles with a scale of possibilities of graduates' practice application and the possibility of definite profiling arranged by the schools with respect to certain rules which are a component of the (group model) educational programme. These group branches are to be characterised by an appropriate education standard. This means the same as in the first case, the requirements for the general education process, key skills and vocational education, and as for the group branches of secondary vocational education the professional (departure) standards. The educational standard must be involved in every educational programme of a certain field and the group (model) curricular project, making possible the problem-less utilisation of the (group) educational branch and the rules of the respective building of the curricular project with respect to the local conditions, will be stated for every group branch. There is a precondition here that the offer oı possibilities will be sufficiently wide, so that it enables profiling but respecting the width of the group branch simultaneously,

q the Phare branches, with the common first class and with the possibility of branching preparation (training), can be incorporated into these structures, so that their departures agree with the presently incorporated branches

q this more stable structure (where the long term implementation in practice is presumed) should be included into the relevant regulation at the level of a decree of the Ministry of Education - as an annex to the recent decree on secondary schools or after passing the new act on education as an autonomous edict. The record keeping of educational programmes should be established.

q despite the obvious need to maintain the difference between the certification of vocational and professional branches or the certification of the educational branches with different levels of attained education respectively, the legislative barriers of their application in all kinds of secondary schools with vocational character can be removed (e. g. by the acceptance of the form of so-called integrated schools by the change of §1 point 3 of decree No. 354/1991 Sb., on secondary schools or by the agreement with the "mixed" schools SVS and STS when the school is being incorporated into the register (school network) or when the data in the register are being changed).

q in the case of wider application of educational modules a properly chosen institution (VÚOŠ) should be delegated (or legislatively delegated respectively) to guarantee the preparation of the proper educational paths, which would guarantee the quality of attaining a certificate with regard to the standpoints of social partners (the employers above all)

4.3 The possibilities to conceive the preparation of a wide profile in the first classes in secondary schools with vocational fields

An educational programme with more education levels (more grades of acquired education) and with more points of

departure.

A brief analysis of the question:

The question of the universal first classes and the pupils' choice of educational path regards act No. 29/1984 Sb., on the system of ZŠ, SŠ and VOŠ (the education act) and also act No. 564/1990 Sb., on the state administration and self-administration in education, MŠMT edict No. 354/1991 Sb., on secondary schools and MŠMT edict No. 10/1997 Sb., on the acceptance of pupils and other applicants to education in secondary schools.

According to the reasons mentioned in the chapter 5 part b) the comprehensive application of the universal first class will probably not be implemented. Anyway the recent legal arrangement need not become an obstacle for the pilot schools which want to establish the universal first class or to continue in its application.

The provision of §39 of the education act was important for the possibility of conceiving fields with wide profiles, because it declares that pupils in schools are taught by curricula (u_ební plány), curricular projects or other approved curricular documents, which contain at least the most important aim of education, the whole structure of subjects, the list of individual subjects and their short description or the list of other structured content units.

It can be deduced from the interpretation that this means besides traditional curriculum documents also modular educational programmes. The Education Act does not exclude the possibility of differently comprehended subjects.

The basic provision concerning this theme is involved in the act on State Administration and Self-Governing in Education in §3, which arranges the competencies of headmasters. This legal rule declares the headmaster's administration competencies during the acceptance of new pupils into professional and vocational courses, the competency to allow pupils to change their branches and the competency to amend the pedagogical process according to the curricular documents.

The headmaster can amend, after the proposals of the founder or other subject respectively (any legal subject or citizen), the educational process at the school within the borders stated by curricular projects. Professional-pedagogical conditions which are specified from the viewpoint of the delineating of general or specific content, are not included in any legal rule; it concerns more the directive actions of the ministry (according the appropriate legal norms).

Conclusions and recommendations:

The most available state would be the application of an appropriately general structure of the system of branches – group branches, by the new legal rule, which could restore the recent decree on secondary schools in the part, which describes this system. Model education programmes of group branches, or individual education programmes respectively, will contain (when demanded) the common first class and points of departure in more levels.

Because the current curricular documents contain certain preconditions for a curricular projects amendment, or for application of a certain set of subjects in the curricular project respectively, not the legal rules, which does not concern the subject content and its division into classes but these conditions are an obstacle. We think that within the present legal rules it is possible to achieve the aims, for example by the change of appropriate conditions of the use of curricular project.

If necessary and in view of the fact that the question of common first classes concerns the curricular projects of more education sectors (both the professional and vocational branches), we can consider the fourth part (e. g. §13) of decree No. 354/1991 Sb., on secondary schools, and the possibility of common first classes can be explicitly expressed under certain circumstances.

Acceptance to the branch has become a general habit, which has been supported with the recent acceptance to the VOTEC branch and with the appropriate cell in the acceptance application to the secondary school. This year, the acceptance application to the secondary schools is no longer a part of decree No. 10/1997 Sb., on the acceptance of pupils and other applicants to education in secondary schools, and it can be appropriately amended for this reasons.

4.4 A different rate of compulsory educational work in module arrangement of subjects

A brief analysis of the question:

The need for uneven distribution of compulsory educational work during the school year is one of the basic preconditions of organisation and implementation of module education in pilot schools. There are more solutions to this problem. Anyway, in the beginning, it is necessary to clarify the present state of legal amendments, which cannot be omitted.

1) Teaching staff (= teachers and masters of technical and professional education) in pilot schools have an occupational relationship and that is why their occupational relations must respect the labour code of law. The labour code of law amends the work time generally, it also sets the basic legal framework for the pilot school teaching staff. The extent of work time is amended by the MPSV (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) decree No. 63/1968 Sb., on the principles of weekly work time short cutting and the principles of work arrangements within five-day work weeks.

The stated week work time is 42.5 hours in a five-day work week according to these legal rules. In accordance with our needs, the labour code of law says that:

q the week work time is distributed so that with even distribution to the single weeks the difference in work time between single weeks does not exceed three hours and so that the work time of single weeks does not exceed 9.5 hours. The average week work time must not exceed in a certain period, usually four weeks, the limit for the stated week work time (§84 point 2).

q other available amendments of week work time can be carried out with the agreement of the employee and the work time can in individual cases exceed 9,5 hours (in §86 point 3)

q employees may be charged with overtime work, only as an exception, in the time of rest between two shifts or in non-work days, but must not exceed eight hours in individual weeks (in §97 point 1 and 2)

q during the calendar year, an employee may be charged only with 150 hours of overtime work, the extent beyond this limit can be allowed under certain conditions by the labour office (in §97 point 3 and 4)

q according to the legal rule enacted by the central bodies, the employer may, after discussion with the labour union, distribute the work time in an uneven manner so that the average work week time does not exceed the limit stated for the week work time in the period of the whole calendar year, when it concerns work activities, where the uneven distribution of work during a year is required (in §85 point 2)

2) Edict of the Czech government No. 503/1992 Sb., which states the rate of the compulsory educational work of teachers and the of educational work of other pedagogical workers in education, divides the compulsory education work into (§2):

q direct compulsory education work, which is for the teaching staff in pilot schools 21 hours a week (in §3 point 1 letter h). Direct compulsory education work includes also 1-3 hours a week of some other taxatively stated activities (duties of class teacher, educational consulting, school management, pedagogical activities within the district). Direct compulsory education work of the headmaster, assistant headmaster, other pedagogical workers, which have a claim of additional charge for management, and some other pedagogical workers is lowered according to the number of pupils in the class (in §4).

q preparation for direct compulsory education work and other works, which is a consequence of education organisation in school, up to the extent of the stated week work time 42.5 hours

It arises from the demands mentioned by the pilot schools that besides the direct compulsory education work, which is distributed unevenly, more attention should be paid to the preparation for and direct compulsory education work. This means not only the work claims of the preparation period in the creation of curricular documents, but also their additional development and completion of the individual modules. As a much important part of this trend – if the education in the pilot school should be really variable and with the accordance with the needs of people and the labour market – is the need of additional education of the teaching staff. This moment cannot be skipped, because if it concerns educational seminars or studies outside of work (improvement of qualification according to the labour code), it is an work obstacle for which a reward can be claimed. The teaching staff need not omit the possibility of qualification according to the act on employment (No. 1/1991 Sb., in the sense of further amendments) - this time is also taken as an obstacle of work with reward. Not only the time of education but also the time of preparation for the direct educational require the possibility of uneven distribution so that the modules are not changed because of the stated number of lessons and that the education process is not disturbed by the absence of teachers because of reasons concerning their preparation for direct compulsory educational work.

Conclusions and recommendations:

1. In principle, we must follow the fact that the basic framework of the work time is stated by the legal amendment included in the labour code and that to change this system

q long-term implementation is needed
q very complicated matter-of-fact amendments are needed
q is not principally required by the teaching staff

The labour code provides a wide scale of possibilities to use the present legal framework of the stated work week time, including overtime. As well, it enables the Ministry of Education to produce it its own resort rule, which can amend the uneven distribution of work time.

2. Government edict No. 503/1992 Sb., which states the rate of the compulsory educational work of teachers and the of educational work of other pedagogical workers in education, is enacted under the competency included in he act No. 143/1992 Sb., on the wages and rewards for occupational promptness in budget organisations and some other organisations. Because this act states the extent of the rate of compulsory education work and its division into direct compulsory education work and preparation for direct compulsory educational work, we can suppose that the proportion of both the elements in the area of pilot schools could be amended in a more available manner. There are more variants of the solution, for example:

q the different extent of the direct compulsory educational work for the teaching staff in pilot schools and in other schools. This model is more demanding for the work of teachers in the direct compulsory educational work. It should influence financial matters, but it probably disallows the preparation of curricula or additional profession education or other activities at the same time.

q uneven distribution of direct compulsory educational work. It could be implemented in a certain non-delineated period, e. g. within a month, semester (pololetí), school year, and then the extent of direct compulsory education work in pilot schools would not be different from the usual extent after a certain period. The competency of pilot schools would be then to decide, when the preparation and the direct compulsory education work is being done.

The main standpoint should be the physical and psychological acceptability, because probably the direct compulsory educational work cannot be done in extent of the stated week work time. This amendment also requires the elaboration of the models of needs and acceptability of charging the teaching staff. These models would specify the limits of uneven distribution of the direct compulsory education work.

An advantage of this system is the possibility within the modules to increase the extent of direct compulsory educational work in a certain period, whereas in the next period the preparation is enabled and there is also the possibility of additional education of the teaching staff.

3. The uneven distribution of the work time according the resort rule combined with the preparation for the direct compulsory educational work. Two ways:

q a different extent of direct compulsory educational work according to the governmental act, or

q the same extent of direct compulsory educational work, but proportionally distributed in relation to the whole rate of direct compulsory educational work.

(For example one of the practical solutions:

a) to state the yearly amount of work hours in secondary (or secondary VOTEC respectively) schools, and to distribute them to every teacher for individual subjects in written form. During every month the employee produces a document of completed hours in individual areas.

b) enable in the appropriate resort rule a different arrangement of the direct compulsory educational work under the condition that the module arrangement of subject is a part of approved curricular documents)

4.5 Certificates

A brief analysis of the question:

Issuing certificates as the documents of successful graduation of an individual module is one of the requirements of pilot schools. The issuance of grade reports is not amended in the present legal norms concerning education. Some important provisions are in MŠMT decree No. 362/1991 Sb., on the organisation of the school year in primary schools, secondary schools and special schools, where it is stated in §2 point 5 that the pupils receive a report on the last day of education in every semester (pololetí). It is stated in the decree on secondary schools (§33 point 1) and in the education act (§38a point 2) that the list of the valid applications of reports (accepted by the state) is issued by the Ministry of Education. The usual way of publishing the list of forms is "V_stník MŠMT." (normally published papers).

Conclusions and recommendations:

In principle, we can recommend two solutions:

a) amendment of legal rules

In the respect of the provision (§38a point 1 letter l) of the education act, the schools have the duty to keep documentation stated by the legal norms, and together with the above-mentioned §33 point 1 of the decree on secondary schools, the schools have the duty to use only the forms approved by MŠMT. The report forms are accountable forms, according to the same provision. In the case that the term (educational) module is included, in connection with legal amendments according the points a) or b) of these chapter, into the education act and maybe also into the appropriate legal rule amending the system of branches, the certificate of graduation should also be added to the education act or to the decree on secondary schools respectively. The precondition of this solution is the relative autonomy of these certificates with accordance to the possibility of establishing the system of branches based on smaller units – education modules. In view of the possibilities of multi-level education with appropriate points of departure the graduate would accomplish the appropriate education level (granted with the final certificate) by gradually attaining the certificates with a condition of a certain number of compulsory modules. This system can also help with the certification of the whole life learning. It should be mentioned that the other possibility is to write the list of accomplished modules in the final certificate (e. g. Irish certificates) and not to provide other official partial evaluation of individual modules.

b) within the present legal amendments

In view of the fact that the appropriateness of reports are not mentioned in the present legal rules, we have an opinion that it is possible, after elaborating the proposal of the form of certificate approving the graduation of education module and its approving by MŠMT, to include certain form into the list of valid forms of reports with appropriate limits of validity only for certain branches.

4.6 Final projects of pupils

A brief analysis of the question:

Pilot schools recommend establishing the pupils' projects accomplished by the final project as a part of the Maturita exam or the final report. It is obvious that this requirement, with its extent and its organisation of the project, exceeds for example the provision of §11 point 3 of MŠMT decree No. 442/1991 Sb., on secondary school and secondary centre education graduation. Even if reforms of the Maturita exam (or also the final exams) seems necessary, the recommendations (e. g. to the examiners) are motivated by some principles, which will probably be applied. It is proposed to combine education results evaluation implemented by the school with the common exams set from outside. A great part of this relatively standardised exam will be set by the state, whether at the central or local level. We suppose that the social partners could influence the exams in vocational subjects, so that the Maturita (or final exam) becomes a more effective tool of secondary VOTEC education evaluation control. In the view of strong individualisation of every project, we suppose that the proposal seems to be little bit contradictory, however it is a good proposal for the implementation in subject praxis or the implementation of education modules oriented towards the praxis or within VOTEC training.

Conclusions and recommendations

a) Because of all the above-mentioned reasons we recommend using the results or a contingent defending of the final project as a subsidiary criterion at Maturita or the final exam.

b) If there is interest in including the final project in the Maturita, it will be necessary to mention this "little dissertation" in decree No. 442, or in the future amended act (education act). But it is necessary to state (in consensus with social partners) the parameters of such a pupil's project (for example the approximate time extent), parameters of relevant final work and parameters concerning evaluation, including the evaluation related to other parts of Maturita or final exam.

4.7 The question of "state apprentices"

A brief analysis of the question:

The non-symmetrical position of SVS compared with other kinds of secondary schools is already included in the provisions of the education act. We have found discrepancies compared with the present role of state administration towards the educational institutions in §10, 11, 11a and 12. It concerns e. g. the provision of §10 point 2, which provides the government with the competency to pass off governmental decrees, which state the cases, when the central body of the state administration has the duty to set up the SVS; provision of §10 point 3, which enables the establishing or abolishing of the SVS in accordance with the stated school network; §11 point 1, the bodies and organisations, which set up a SVS, are responsible for the preparation of youth for vocation, controlling them, and they have the duty to create favourable conditions for pupil's skills and initiative development and are responsible for their application in practice; or §11 point 2, the administrative bodies run the SVS of a certain area and plan the preparation of youth for their vocation. The above-mentioned provisions support the general intention, expressed in the second part of education act, to provide pupils of SVS (apprentices) with theoretical and practical education and pedagogical education outside of the class from the sources of responsible bodies and organisations (VHJ and companies in the past, central bodies of the state administration in the present). Point 2 of §2 states a duty to reimburse the operational costs (with certain exceptions stated in §12 point 1, which are being reimbursed by the state) from the costs of physical or legal subjects, who are the contingent future employers. In view of the fact that §12 point 3 allows the reimbursement of these costs from the state budget in cases, where the pupil has no definite future employer (physical or legal subject) and because of the below mentioned arguments of legal occupational relationship, only a very small number of organisations are still reimbursing the cost of the education of pupils.

It can be claimed that the participation of employers in the education of pupils in vocational courses, which is presupposed by present legal regulations, may provide the graduates (accomplishing pupils) with uneven position in the labour market. Some basic points:

q the number of apprentices who agree with such obligations is very low. Anyway it does not solve the problem of the financing of VOTEC training
q reimbursement of the employers costs with the trainee's obligation to stay for several years in an occupational relationship is not always absolutely adequate with regard to the following occupational setting and the wage conditions; the employer always insists on the graduate's obligation
q contractual obligations are undertaken in other situations than is the situation of the employer in the time, when the trainees complete the school – the unstable position of the employer influences the trainee
q unrealised contractual obligation (even in part) can become an obstacle for the future employment of such a trainee, because he)she cannot be placed in the labour market

during the time of obligation (unwillingness of contingent future employer to reimburse the trainee's obligation)

Conclusions and requirements:

The balancing of the approach to SVS and STS means in praxis to solve:

a) the legal position of SVS and the position of their pupils, which has been recently uneven in the relevant legal norms compared with other kinds of schools

b) the question of financing the practical preparation of apprentices and the sponsoring of the apprentices, which can put the graduates of different kinds of schools into an uneven position. This should help to stop so-called black sponsoring or to a certain degree restrict the use of apprentices as cheap manpower or the misuse of the vocational training for other than training aims and along with it enable the practical preparation of trainees in real working employment.

In view of the work content of the group engaged in the use of pilot school experience in VOTEC education financing, we submit a proposal of recommendation in the area of trainee position and in the area of contingent proposals of legal amendments of this problem.

We recommend not differentiating between individual kinds of secondary schools in the education act as for the fundamental (institutional) function, financing and position of the pupil. In this situation, when the majority of the financial costs of trainees' preparation is reimbursed by the state, the increase in the requirement on the state budget cannot be very intensive. (Anyway, the provision of the financial resources of VOTEC training is a principle problem.)

From the point of view of the fundamental function of administrative bodies (or other subjects), as for the competencies on SVS (or vocational school respectively), these competencies have been shifted to the MŠMT (except for the private subject and the Ministry of Agriculture) by act No. 272/1996 Sb., which makes some provisions in the system of central bodies of state administration of the Czech Republic. We recommend that the new education act (in the case, where the act places the fundamental competency on the upper self-governing districts in the certain areas of secondary education), in part devoted to the state administration and self-government in education, should shift (or approve respectively) a fundamental function on SVS (including agricultural SVS), as it is in STS or Gymnasia, from the central bodies of the state administration to the upper self-governing districts. In the case that questions of territorial arrangement are not solved until the enactment of the new education act, the fundamental competencies should be shifted to the education authorities with bigger regional territorial competency.

The process of involving the schools into the school network remains a question. If a significant part of the cost of SVS is reimbursed from the regional sources, it would be useful to shift the competency of including SVS into the network to the regional level. If a significant part of the cost of SVS is reimbursed from the state budget, we recommend leaving the competency of including the SVS in the network of the central bodies. We recommend including workplaces of practical preparation (established by private subjects) on the closest level and to leaving the practical education centres on the regional level. We recommend leaving the Inspectorate activities on the central level.

The position of SVS pupils should not be different from the position of the STS pupils, as for the obligation of pupil towards the subjects reimbursing the education/training costs. It is not only a matter of shifting the costs to the state, it is also required to strengthen the responsibility of professional partners (potential employers of VOTEC graduates) for the training of apprentices, whether it is a direct responsibility or the responsibility is shifted to certain financial reward for the training (form of application of this responsibility is a matter of the group engaging in financing). The possibility of direct "sponsoring" of SVS pupils should be kept for the future (one of the possibilities are the private or company SVS) with the condition that the participation of the professional partner increase along with the possibility of application of pupil in the partner companies.

5. SUMMARY

a) In the area of the terminology, we recommend, with regard to the future purposes of the education act, including also the following basic terms and to achieve their definition in a consensual way

q educational level (which is explicitly used in other legal norms)
q educational programme
q educational standard
q educational module

For the purposes of the rules with lower legal power (especially the decree on secondary schools or the decree on the system of branches respectively):

q group branch
q or educational field respectively

b) As for the amendment of the system of professional and vocational branches, we recommend accepting the existence of the classical and module arrangement according to the recommendation of the Strategical study and the experience of pilot schools, we recommend allowing the existence of different educational paths and different forms of the arrangement of educational programmes. We also propose:

q excluding the unused vocational and professional branches from the network.
q creating a more stable structure of the system of preparation branches based on so-called group branches and emphasising wider possibilities of graduates' application in practice with regard to the wider profiling of group branches

q the Phare branches, with the common first class and with the possibility of branching preparation (training), should be incorporated into these structures, so that their departures agree with the presently incorporated branches

q this more stable structure (where the long-term implementation in practice is expected) should be included into the relevant regulation at the level of a decree of the Ministry of Education - as an annex of the recent decree on secondary schools or after passing the new act on education as an autonomous edict. The record keeping of education programmes should be established

q removing the legislative barriers of application of professional and vocational branches in all kinds of secondary schools of vocational character, where such an education is possible (e. g. by accepting the form of so-called integrated schools by the change of §1 point 3 of decree No. 354/1991 Sb., on secondary schools or by the agreement with the "mixed" schools SVS and STS when the school is being incorporated into the register (school network) or when the data in the register are being changed)

q in the case of wider application of educational modules, a properly chosen institution (VÚOŠ) should be delegated (or legislatively delegated respectively) to guarantee the preparation of the proper educational paths, which would guarantee the quality of attained certificate with regard to the standpoints of social partners (the employers above all)

c) The most available state would be the application of an appropriately general structure of the system of branches - group branches, by the new legal rule, which could restore the recent decree on secondary schools in the part, which describes this system. Model educational programmes of group branches, or individual educational programmes respectively, are to contain (when it is required) the common first class and the points of departure in more levels.

If necessary and in view of the fact that the question of common first classes concerns the curricular projects of more education sectors (both the professional and vocational branches), we can consider the fourth part (e. g. §13) of decree No. 354/1991 Sb., on secondary schools, and the possibility of common first classes can be explicitly expressed under certain circumstances.

Acceptance to the branch has become a general habit, which has been supported with the recent acceptance to the VOTEC branch and with the appropriate cell in the acceptance applications to secondary schools. This year, the acceptance application to the secondary schools is no longer a part of decree No. 10/1997 Sb., on the acceptance of the pupils and other applicants to education in secondary schools, and it can be appropriately amended for this reasons.

d) The labour code provides a wide scale of possibilities to utilise the present legal framework of the stated work week time, including overtime. As well, it enables the Ministry of Education to produce it its own resort rule, which can amend the uneven distribution of work time.

2. Government edict No. 503/1992 Sb., which states the rate of compulsory educational work of teachers and the of educational work of other pedagogical workers in education,

is enacted under the competency included in act No. 143/1992 Sb., on the wages and rewards for occupational promptness in budget organisations and some other organisations. Because this act states the extent of the rate of compulsory educational work and its division into direct compulsory educational work and preparation for direct compulsory educational work, we can assume that the proportion of both the elements in the area of pilot schools could be amended in a more available manner. There are more variants to the solution, for example:

q the different extent of the direct compulsory educational work for the teaching staff in pilot schools and other schools,
q the uneven distribution of direct compulsory education work. It could be implemented in a certain non-delineated period, e. g. within a month, semester (pololetí), school year
q the uneven distribution of work time according the resort rule combined with the preparation for the direct compulsory educational work. Two ways
q the different extent of direct compulsory educational work according the governmental act, or
q the same extent of direct compulsory educational work, but proportionally distributed in relation to the whole rate of direct compulsory educational work.

e) As for the question of awarding of certifications for the accomplishment of individual modules, it should be mentioned that one of the possibilities is to write a list of the accomplished modules in the final certificate and not to mention the partial evaluations of every module.

Should interest (of the employers) to issue the "module certificate" remain, it is possible (because the present legal rules do not express the appropriateness of the report) to include the required form into the list of valid report forms after elaborating the proposal of the form confirming the graduation of certain education module and after its approval by MŠMT.

f) With respect to e. g. the conclusions of the OECD report on the educational policy in the area of the Maturita and final exam, we recommend using the conclusions and the contingent defence of the final project as an subsidiary criterion in the Maturita exam or the final exam.

If there is interest in including the final project into the Maturita, it will be necessary to mention this "little dissertation" in decree No. 442, or in the future amended act (education act). But it is necessary to state (in consensus with social partners) the parameters of such a pupil's project (for example the approximate time extent), parameters of relevant final work and parameters in the manner of evaluation, including the evaluation related to other parts of Maturita exam or final exam.

We recommend that the new education act (in the case, when the act establishes the fundamental competency on the upper self-governed districts in the certain areas of secondary education), in part devoted to the state administration and self-government in education, should shift (or approve respectively) a fundamental function on SVS (including the agricultural SVS), as it is in STS or Gymnasia, from the central bodies of the state administration to the upper self-governing districts. In the case that question of territorial arrangement are not solved until the enactment of the new education act, the fundamental competencies should be shifted to the education authorities with bigger regional territorial competency.

The process of involving the schools into the school network remains a question. If a significant part of the cost of SVS is reimbursed from the regional sources, it would be useful to shift the competency of the including SVS into the network to the regional level. If a significant part of the cost of SVS is reimbursed from the state budget, we recommend leaving the competency of including the SVS into the network in the central bodies. We recommend including the workplaces of practical preparation (established by private subjects) on the closest level and to leaving the practical education centres on the regional level. We recommend leaving the Inspectorate activities on the central level.
The position of SVS pupils shouldn't be different from the position of the STS pupils, as for the obligation of pupil to the subjects reimbursement of the education/training costs (Ľ the arguments in part 5g). It is not only a matter of shifting the costs to the state, it is also required to strengthen the responsibility of professional partners (potential employers of VOTEC graduates) for the training of apprentices, whether it is a direct responsibility or the responsibility is shifted to a certain financial contribution to the training (the form of application of this responsibility is a matter of the group engaging in financing). The possibility of direct "sponsoring" of SVS pupils should be kept for the future (one of the possibilities is the private or firm SVS) with the condition that the participation of the professional partner increase along with the possibility of application of pupils in the partner companies.

Supplement: Recommendation for general legal amendments

Important changes in the legal norms in education are expected after elaborating and passing the education bill(s). This change has been prepared for three or four years and only several present acts have been novelised and the document on Czech education development (Kvalita a zodpov_dnost - Quality and Responsibility) has been written and accepted in consensus. To elaborate a new education act which would respect the changed relations in VET environment, it could be useful to evaluate - or to complement respectively - this programme document so that it becomes a more defined basis for the aims of the new education act enriched with the evaluations of the last two years.

The development in the education area isn't as vehement as in the first three years after 1989. In spite of this, for example, the evaluation standards for the primary (and lower secondary) education, the evaluation standards for the four-year grammar schools have been publicised; the basic curriculum, which was proposed several years ago as an educational standard for twenty VET fields, hasn't passed yet.

Despite these changes it cannot be ignored that the present legal norms in education and the act on education include many parts which can be criticised because they have kept the concepts of the time of their creation.

The principle problem of act No. 29/1984 Sb., on primary schools, on secondary schools and post-secondary VET schools (the act) which has been many times novelised, is its structure and somewhere the problem is the outworn content, also in the parts regarding VET (for example the so-called state apprentices). This basic education act should be changed according the view of the new Constitution of Czech Republic (from 1993) which disables the setting of duties or defining of competencies by legal norms which have a weaker legal power than the power of acts. The system of financing the education, the conception of training and passing the pedagogical documents has been changed. It influences the system of educational and vocational branches. The need for the exact evaluation of schools, especially the evaluation of the quality of graduates' education, has become more important. The schools also provide a lot of services in the institutions which are being established according the act on education institutions, this division no longer being purposeful.

Because of the above-mentioned arguments the whole relatively complex educational system should be assessed from the legal point of view and the parts of edicts, which set the duties or define competencies, should be involved into the act. According to our opinions it will concern the number of ordination in the present edict on secondary schools, on graduating in the secondary schools, on the structure of the education year in post-secondary VET schools, and so on.

Relation to other legal norms is an important factor, which influences particularly the timing of creating the education bills which are created (or are not created respectively) by the decision of the state political representation. The relation to the Constitution has been already mentioned, but from the point of view of the education administration (and from the point of view of the vocational and especially the apprentice education system) the interim absence of the upper self-administrated regions is crucial. This absence will be solved in several following months. The change of financing of the organisations connected with the state budget is also expected. The act on state property and so on, was being prepared but it hasn't been created yet.

From the viewpoint of the following one or two years, we recommend elaborating a new bill on education which will respect the shifting relations in VOTEC education in view of the above-mentioned factors. It is not easy to propose a number of education acts in the field of primary, secondary and upper vocational education.

We recommend understanding "post"-secondary VET as an separate segment of the education system which is different from the secondary education graduated with "maturita" and we recommend, with respect to the possibly increased number of private post-secondary VET schools, adjusting their activity and the basic conditions for their creation and other associated activities (e. g. graduating the studies, relation to the bachelor degree programme) of this subsystem with a free-standing act.

In the contrary, secondary VET education – whether graduated by "maturita" or the traditional vocational certificate, or by other vocational exams on the secondary education level – should be left in the framework of the corresponding act(s) together with the general education with respect to many common terminological, organisational and methodological elements. We also recommend emphasising the differences in both the subsystems, particularly in the field of practice of vocational training which is harmed particularly by the transformation of the economic area in the present. This act should include not only the basic pedagogical associated activities, character of individual education levels, relation to the educational content (standards, basic curricula, education programmes), acceptation and graduation, education certification, but also the basic conditions of school administration and self-governing; this act should define the conditions of creation and termination of schools, define the character of inspection activity in education, define the school financing and other activities which are necessary for example to practice preparation, define the power and relations of individual administration authorities and self-governing bodies taking part in school management, define the basic duties and warranties of the involved authorities, bodies, pupils and teachers, self-governing bodies in education, or other matters like basic criteria of comparison with the education abroad, the basic principles of the out-of-school activity and its financing, and so on.

We recommend involving also the so far segregated part of state administration and self-administration (defined in act No. 564/1990 Sb., on state administration and self-administration in education) and the part applied to the educational institutions (in the present act No. 76/1978 Sb., on education institutions) into this act. It is obvious that this education act will become a crucial legal norm in the area of so-called regional education. With respect to the non-state education sector, it will involve also the parts so far described in the edicts, or in the contrary not yet adapted in the law (e. g. the educational standards), respectively. It
can be expected that the act will become very extensive. This extensiveness will probably disturb the legal comprehension of differences which brings a new approach to vocational education, which means: in the area of Phare pilot schools.

In the aspect of the expression of the responsibility of teachers as a basic factor influencing the activities in school, and also in the aspect of practice (work conditions for teachers, for masters of vocational training, for work teachers and so on, may be in the process of being changed; the necessity of certain corroboration, additional education of pedagogical workers and so on, arises), we recommend creating an independent act on teachers which would define the conditions of teachers' work. This act could, for example, classify the categories of pedagogical workers, define the area of the legal position of individual categories of workers and their relationship to the state, define the basic conditions in acquiring the technical and pedagogical competencies, the rate of compulsory educational work, define the conditions of possible corroborating operation, the requirements on the functions in the education system, and so on. Last but not least, this act should also define the relationship of teachers to their additional education and define the principles of the management of the additional education of education workers.

The system of acts on primary (and lower secondary) schools should be completed with an independent act on the institutional education, protected education and providing preventive care, but its content is outside the purposes of this paper.

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

Jan HRABA

Miloslav HABÁN
Jana HORNOVÁ
Daniela KORENKOVÁ
Jindrich N_M_ÍK
Prokop SÝKORA

INTRODUCTION

A school representing institutionalised and formalised adaptation to the environment reflects a social structure typical for a particular cultural and historical situation. Social establishment is carried out by a structured, heterogeneous and often very dynamic relationship displayed by communication with its surroundings on an ideological, economic, personal and material level. Each level or feature of the structure of a school has one or more channels to implement the communication, creating a complicated network of contacts which enable the school to fulfil its institutional function. It is intended to define those essential and frequented relations which are of permanent nature and it is possible to label them as social partners.

It is obvious that the main social partners of the school are

- the family as a partner creating the "input" (i. e. the student) for the institutional process of adaptation
- employers as a subject formulating the "demand" for the results of the process

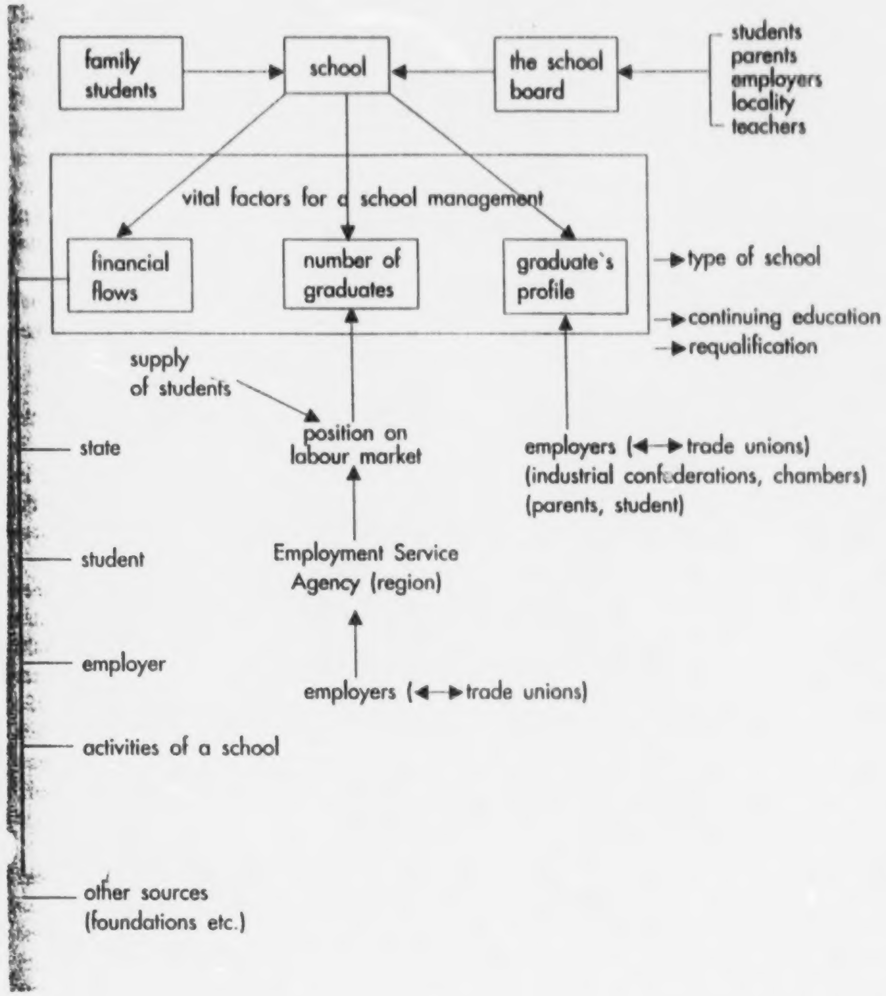
The student represents the centre of the social dimension. The course of his vocational training is determined by the quality of the social partnership and the result is influenced by the readiness and will of the social partners to contribute to a good outcome.

The above mentioned partners, the family and the employer, are the bearing partners although they are not the only ones as it is obvious from the scheme of structured relations arising from formalised tasks of a school as an institution (see Annex)

The formalised tasks mean:

- the securing of financial flow
- defining the number of graduates, corresponding to the future needs of the labour market
- defining the graduate's profile

Scheme of structured relationships/structure arising from formalised tasks of a school


family students
school
the school board
students
parents
employers
locality
teachers
vital factors for a school management
financial flows
number of graduates
graduate's profile
type of school
continuing education
requalification
supply of students
position on labour market
employers (◄–► trade unions)
(industrial confederations, chambers)
(parents, student)
state
student
employer
activities of a school
other sources (foundations etc.)
Employment Service Agency (region)
employers (◄–► trade unions)

Notes

1. a family and a student are stated
   - q as a source of input into the educational process
   - q as partners for formulation of educational conditions
   - q as a possible participant in financing (e. g. private schools)

2. Main factors for the school management are
   - q the ensuring of financial sources, which correspond with activities of the school
   - q optimization of the number of graduates which will ensure their position on the labour market (this provides the best reputation for the school)
   - q a profile of a graduate expresses the effect of the school

3. Participation of trade unions is derived from their main tasks, which is to enforce employees´ concerns in a dialogue with employers. Therefore they are bound to an employer. Their dialogue also concerns the securing of appropriate qualification as well as the retaining and deepening thereof.

Regarding the involvement of the other partners outlined in the scheme, other levels of their sociological importance and function located in another relationship are to be realized.

The joint reason for its hand-in-hand functioning is laid down in the adjusting of the educational structure of the society to meet its needs. The aim of the process is to optimize the relations between the "skill structure" of the society and the activities necessary for its functioning. It means the minimal necessity of re-qualification and enables focus on the strengthening of previously acquired qualification.

However, the plans and opinions of the social partners may and will be very different and they are not likely to correspond with the goals outlined in the previous paragraph without further influence. Whereas an adequate form and direction of vocational training adjusted to the original prospect and possibilities of the family and the student is essential for the family, the quality, flexibility and personal involvement of a graduate is important for an employer. So that the basic goal of the partnership is fulfilled, a framework is created by the school. It is aimed at reaching a compromise between the parents´ and employer´s views on the course, purpose and importance of vocational education. Other social partners described in the scheme are to take an active and important role in this process.

A school is mostly involved in the quality of the educational process determining its social attractiveness and employers´ demand for it. Therefore the school should be keen on co-operation with social partners (school councils, advisory bodies) to ensure its attractiveness and should also actively co-operate with other surroundings institutions (Employment Service Agencies, professional institutes, universities and employers). The existence of appropriate financial flow shows that a school's strategy has succeeded.

With regards to the establishing the relationship between a vocational school and its regional surroundings, its economical, social and demographic structure is to be taken into account. The structure implementation depends on needs, problems, possibilities and resources. The desired result is a creative environment supporting development of all positive regional activities. The partnership between local state administrative authorities, civil associations and all institutions working in the region including schools of any level is the key to the prosperity of the region. Such a motivated dialogue of the partners is to contribute to the development and focus of vocational education and training as an important factor of local and regional development.

The regulation and the economic role of the social environment – the state – represents an essential aspect and condition necessary to fulfil the aims of the social partnership.

Due to the variety of the social partners, the social partnership cannot be perceived as a fixed network of structured relations. Taking into consideration the changeableness of its surroundings, the social partnership has to be regarded as a continuous process which cannot be bound by a strict network or structure defined in advance. This point of view is the basic feature of the social partnership. It is necessary to regard the social partnership as a process for which appropriate surroundings have to be created and its continuity has to be ensured.

Parents (and students) can create a representative body and have some influence on the school level.

Employers should feel their role in vocational education as their number one priority on all levels (school, region, state) as all of their activities are bound to quality, professionalism and the availability of human resources.

Based on the analysis of the work group and taking into account the variety of systems of social partners in different EU (and also OECD) countries it is vital to enlighten the role of the trade unions on all levels of the educational system. We derive their role from their basic task in our scheme which means the protection and enforcing of employees' concerns in the dialogue with employers. The dialogue comprises not only professional requirements of employees but also provides adequate qualification as well as its maintenance and strengthening, taking place at employer locations and sector or entrepreneur associations. The results of this dialogue should be entailed as obligations in collective agreements. The mechanism would ensure that the requirements of the trade unions will be maintained and would initiate the activities of employers in the area of vocational training. It does not eliminate the subsidiary role of the trade unions while enforcing strategic goals on the regional or state level.

We do believe that this model could be suitable in looking for a joint model in the EU or OECD.

In conclusion, new laws concerning the educational system should therefore concentrate on creating such conditions that would enable schools to make their decisions within the framework of the social partnership as freely as possible. At the same time, conditions for the initiative of the social partners should be supported (according to the OECD

Examiners' Report it is necessary to persuade the social partners that their participation in vocational education and training will be beneficial to them). The continuity of the social partnership depends on who (which participant in the social partnership) plays an active role. On the other hand it is not so important who the provoking partner is. The most important aspect is the amount and type of the activity. At present, Employment Service Agencies who professionally monitor the labour market are the only ones able to fulfil this task. Anyway, the system will be functioning as a whole and there will always be a participant directly interested in it. Unfortunately, should the social partners be passive enough, it could also bring negative results. For example, due to the huge amount of schools at present, schools trying to survive may become the most active partner. It is to be kept in mind that the social partnership cannot be obligatory. The social partnership is based on dialogue. The dialogue among the network of schools, educational institutions, local authorities, agricultural chambers and chambers of commerce as well as associations of entrepreneurs and industrial groups. The dialogue must lead to a compromise between the flexibility needed by the employers and the labour market, fixed periods of the educational cycles and development strategy of the particular sector, town, region and the whole economy.

1. ASSORTMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The theoretical premises outlined in the introduction have to be put into practice. Intending to be as concise as possible we have decided to solve the problem in the most complex way (which means including the experience of pilot schools, recommendations of the Strategic Study on Vocational Education and Training and the Report of OECD Examiners) in the framework of particular parts of the organisational structure.

The introduction has outlined the network of relations between the social partners and the school, which is determined by particular conditions on the one hand and the educational system as a local, regional or state structure on the other hand. As there are basic differences in approach to the organisational structure, we divide the solution of our problem into three main parts:

a) relations in the framework of particular school
b) relations in the framework of the educational system on the regional level
c) relations in the framework of the educational system on the state level

Before we start to deal with the solution of the problem itself (on the above mentioned structural levels), we will try to define the basic aspects of the solution which are: interest, motivation, qualification and liability (responsibility)

CONCERN

The concern on the school level is to acquire an "order"

- from parents (who are interested in the school)
- from employers (or the state – through the Employment Service Agencies)

The concern on the regional level is to reach a balance between demand and supply within the region (inhabitants will be employed in perspective sectors, with regard to the economic background and possibilities within the region) and also to create a vital network for the educational system

The concern on the state level is to positively influence the global development, based on appropriate analysis.

MOTIVATION

The only motivation on the school level is to succeed in marketing the education and to play an active role in competition with other schools of the same type within the region. This is determined by the quality of the graduates and their profile.

Motivation on the regional level is aimed at the effective use of financial sources and ensuring the educational needs of the region

Motivation on the state level is to secure the effective functioning with specified means.

Motivation from the social partners´ point of view is to be considered a complex problem, difficult to outline and to solve in a short period of time as it is connected with a number of general aspects which are seemingly unrelated to vocational education and training (e. g. standard of living, readiness to take part in public life, estimated economic development etc.). The relationship of types of motivation which makes a logical and a functional whole is obvious from the following paragraphs. As a result of this, the necessity of the existence of the relations network, created by the social partners on the defined levels, is emphasised.

Employers

- should be aware of the fact that they will profit from their participation in vocational education and training
- taking part in final exams or in creating curricula, they may transfer the requirements of practice into education in general. It will also enable them to influence the situation in a town or region.

Parents, students

- they must think logically and rationally when they choose what they wish to study
- in connection to that, vocational schools should offer a well considered range of professions and subjects to study (co-operation with employers is necessary)
- a certain role is to be played by primary schools (especially in the eighth and ninth

year). Primary schools should provide pupils with the appropriate information about various professions and subjects. Close co-operation with Employment Service Agencies and therefore (but not directly) with employers is necessary.

Employment Service Agencies

- their motivation derives from their tasks
- if their approach is active they can positively influence the situation within a particular region

COMPETENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY

On the school level, a school is responsible for the quality of education, and not necessarily for the number of graduates and their profile. These responsibilities a school bears as an entrepreneur sui generis are provided with the considerable help of the social partners. The social partners help the school to be the best in its sector which ensures structural, conceptual and other characteristics of the school. Nevertheless, the school having the dominant position by its competence approaches and addresses the social partners. The process does not have to be necessarily legislatively enacted. The school should be naturally interested in it, and society supports and corrects it by the intermediary distribution of funds.

On the regional level, its components are responsible for gathering information for both lower (schools) and higher (state) levels and for regulating the process (school boards, the Employment Service Agencies or other authorities).

On the state level, the state (Ministry) is the qualified body which addresses the social partners and is responsible for legislation, division of financial and other sources and the global information and service for the lower levels.

1.1 The social partnership on the school level

The evaluation of the pilot schools' experience can be described as follows:

The current legislation gives the schools enough space for making independent decisions, which is even emphasised by the liberalisation of vocational education and training. Under these circumstances, the offer (or supply) of vocational education will not respond to the real needs of the economy, but will respond to temporal requirements of parents and students. The offer of vocational education is not directed to "users" thereof (this means entrepreneurs and companies) but rather to students and their parents. Their choice of an educational programme is determined rather by other criteria than the needs of the market (attractiveness, access, character of a region, etc.). That is why educational institutions offer attractive professions and subjects and the number of its graduates exceeds the demand in the labour market. Lowering the standards of education in the attractive professions becomes another typical feature of the problem. Not uncommonly, there is considerable indulgence in admitting new students. If the requirements and the difficulty of the entrance examinations are brought down, the standards and the requirements during the course of the vocational education and training must be lowered also.

On the contrary, the pilot schools co-operated with Employment Service Agencies, which expressed their opinions on the projects. This co-operation provided the schools necessary contacts with the labour market. Their participation (which is derived from the programme) in the creation of educational programmes is sufficient motivation to ensure the required standards of education. Despite this fact, these schools also reflect the pressure of the parents and the students, who are interested in fashionable and lucrative (in their eyes) professions. This becomes apparent especially in big cities where a real labour market does not exist. The pilot schools point out the fact that there are no effective means of regulating this problem. One of the possible answers to this may be hidden in primary schools. They should co-operate with the Employment Service Agencies and employers and based on this co-operation recommend suitable professions to pupils. Unfortunately, no subject aimed at this topic is taught at primary schools although the importance of professional choice is obvious. The topic comprises an orientation in the field and also choice of the right profession or sector either according to pupils interests and abilities or according to possible success on the labour market.

As for school boards, they have not been very successful and seem to be too formal. Despite the negative opinion of the schools, school boards could play an important role. The above outlined problems will be reflected in them too. Mainly, it will be the apparent conflict of interests between the students (and their parents) and the employers, the Employment Service Agencies, Industrial groups or authorities (which as a whole means the labour market).

The evaluation provides evidence that current laws do not define sufficient relations ensuring the rational behaviour of schools (as for the needs of the society). On the contrary, it makes space for the fulfilment of personal wishes.

Taking into consideration the fact that some schools established, in co-operation with employers or Employment Service Agencies, the Council of the Headmaster (instead of an inconvenient school board), a suitable combination of these bodies may be considered. At present, the boards or councils solve mainly pedagogical problems and only marginally deal with problems connected with the social partnership itself.

The pilot schools, based on their own experience, emphasise also the lack of people (parents, employers and other) willing to effectively cooperate with schools. The anonymity of big cities plays an especially negative role.

If the participation of the social partners should function correctly, it is necessary to give priority to the influence of employers. They are the basic social partners who are able, in co-operation with Employment Service Agencies, to positively influence the behaviour of the school.

According to the latest trends in the area of employer associations and entrepreneur groups we may assume, that these organization will establish mechanisms (informative, conceptual, structural and strategical) for conceptual communication with the educational system in the near future.

1.1.1 RECOMMENDED SOLUTION

The solution comprises the following tasks:

q the establishment of school boards as an institution of social partnership with participation of the state authorities
q recommendations of the boards should be more binding for a management of a school

School boards as institutions of the social partners with the participation of the state authorities and especially Employment Service Agencies could solve the problems of adjusting the curriculum of individual schools to the demands of the labour market and particular employers. All this on the condition that the recommendation or the agreement of the school's council are binding on the leadership of the school. An exchange of parents and pupils in the council will probably be a natural phenomenon. Continuity and following the concept by the council would be ensured by the involvement of the previously listed administrative institutions and above all by representatives of employers and their organisations.

The number of members on the school's council is not significant, only the representatives of employers, the Employment Service Agencies and local authorities should prevail over that of pedagogues, pedagogical-psychological consulting bureaus, parents and students.

A special regulation of financial flow which would support education of the professions most sought-after on the labour market (irregardless of the number of students or the content of the education) should be the subsidiary mechanism of execution of the binding recommendations of the council.

It is a pure consequence of the experience and the conclusions stated in the previous part of this report that the proposed solution is not necessarily going to be treated as authoritative and legislatively laid down. The solution can also be found in mere specification of the space provided for such lay-out and so in giving free choice to schools, supposing that the accepted model depend on the will (and the dialogue) of the establisher, the leadership of the school and potential social partners. Thus new relationships could arise where the agreements are respected despite their non-binding character. And this can be the right spur for the application of the subsidiary financial flow.

1.2 Relations in the system of vocational education on the regional level

The Contemporary administrative system of the state and its structure do not correspond with the needs of rational control of vocational education. As regards the making of decisions about the range of the offered educational possibilities, the state is too large. However, the counties with current competence are too small. Therefore we talk about "regions" including several counties joined naturally, defined geographically, by the network of roads and other communications, by their industrial level, population density, etc. It is an area able to provide sufficient background for a stabilised, reasonably structured network of vocational schools, which will be able to satisfy the needs of the specific region in the future. It is necessary to mention here that the term of "region" has nothing in common with recent discussions about higher self-administrative regions and in the case of the establishment of the latter, our "regions" may not necessarily correspond with their disposition.

The relations between the social partners should help form a concept of the system of vocational education, especially according to the needs of the specific region. The constitution of civic (non-governmental) associations able to generally represent the interest of the society does not need to be connected with speculations about the establishment of higher self-administrative regions. Negative consequences should be eliminated by more intensive co-operation of the Employment Service Agencies with the employers, who should be able, as time advances, to specify their long-time requirements in the field of employment.

Co-operation with the unions of entrepreneurs and employers is of highest importance and is absolutely indispensable in forming the concept of the network of educational institutions, the content of the education, the participation in the final exams and in checking the process of educating the students. All of the stated facts could be treated in the framework of regional relations.

It is obvious that on this level we strengthen the role of the employers as crucial social partners. It is not only because they come up with the demands on the educational system, but also because it is difficult to ensure the ability of representation of the delegates of the parents (whose interests can also be represented by the local elected authorities). The participation of the students is utterly negligible because of their limited understanding the problem as global, because of their understanding the problem only from the viewpoint of their local educational institutions. However, nowadays it is already possible to form a representative group of entrepreneurs. On this level it would also be advisable to get the profession chambers involved (lawyers, tax-advisors, doctors, etc.).

The suggested mechanism of the dialogue between the trade unions and employers should play an important role in this field, including the supporting role of the trade unions.

1.2.1 SUGGESTED SOLUTION

It is obvious from the analysis that on the regional level of vocational education we need to concentrate on the problem of drawing a concept of an educational system which would be able to cover the needs of the specific regional market according to its system of labour unions and the disposition of industrial branches.

A special regional council for vocational education should be established to watch over this process. The regional education councillor would officially be the establisher and its leading member. The council would otherwise consist of:

- delegates of employers' unions (The Confederation of Industry, The Confederation of Trade, Chamber of Economy, etc.)
- representatives of professional chambers and communities
- representatives of the Employment Service Agency of the region
- entrusted deputies of local authorities (representing the parents, designated e. g. at the meeting of the mayors from the district)
- possibility of supporting the presence of the trade unions (following negotiations with employers) aimed at enforcing results of collective negotiations

This council would:

- survey the needs of the region with regard to the shares of the individual professions and the number of students needed on the labour market (by cooperation of the Employment Service Agencies with the employers)
- suggest improvements in the network of educational institutions
- suggest ways and the range of application of financial support put forward in chapter 1.1.1
- help with proposing improvements of school-curricula, forming curricula for newly-established branches of education, help at the final exams, etc.

The council would be the authority whose significance and position would be hidden in its recommendations concerning financial flows (no matter if additional or sanctional).

Through the mediation of the Employment Service Agencies and above all the representatives of the employers and their confederations, communication and the enforcement of the region's requirements (or the requirements of the regional labour market) on the schools would be ensured.

It is obvious that these relations, suggested on the regional level, do not need to be regulated by the legislation and can arise ad hoc from activities of the specific region. However, the "space" for its efficient operation must be defined by the legislator.

1.3 Relations in the system of vocational education on the state level

On this level the Ministry of Education as an administrative authority of the state should be thoroughly and exclusively answerable for all the vocational education and training (as has been already stated before). The department should be organized to be able to control this whole complex area from one place. The references and the experience of the councils would be collected here and analysed according to the conditions of the whole state (for instance additional establishing of labour unions in the system, which would otherwise be possible only at few educational institutions, processing of necessary or proposed standards and curricula, etc.). It doesn't seem to be necessary for us to list here everything that needs to be supported on this level, but we need to stress the inevitability of co-operation with the employers and the leadership of the labour market. It is therefore necessary to establish another council for vocational education on this level, led by either the minister or his secretary responsible for vocational education. The council would consist of representatives of the employers and representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Matters responsible for the labour market.

CONCLUSION

In the analysis brought-forward we endeavoured to treat the topic of the social partnership on the field of vocational education. The basis of this report was found in earlier released reports: "Strategical Studies" and "The Aims of the Experts of the OECD", but especially in the experience acquired by the Employment Service Agencies, representatives of the employers and by running the first pilot schools. Of course, we also included the generally accepted approach to this problem, our own evaluation of the influence and the conditions of recent schooling system and also our ideas about the possible future appearance of the system.

We believe that the "survey" that we drafted here and the proposed solutions will in the following discussions at least help find some suitable form of social partnership according to the needs of the society, in the relationship not only with vocational education but also with education in general.

You can see an expectation of development of all kinds of relations and bonds in the society hiding in this report; bonds and relations which haven't been established yet. It is therefore necessary to consider this report an attempt to survey the recent state of things and a suggestion of new possible solutions and ways to reach the demanded appearance of the system. It is of course also (hopefully positively) influenced by the ideas of the authors.

BRIEF SUMMARY

At the beginning the report illustrates the role of the schools being a reflection of social structure and preparing students for their future living- and working-conditions and the position in the society corresponding with it. In the framework of the effectiveness of vocational education the report presents above all the family (=the principal unit in relation with the student) and the employer (=the representative of the future use of the student's acquired potential) as the main logical social partners. Based on the study of the relations between the social partners the Employment Service Agency as an institution surveying the development and regulating by all kinds of means the labour market is also declared to be an important participant in the social partnership. An important role of the trade unions is strengthened by obligations of employers in the framework of collective agreements and the supporting presence on the regional and state level.

At the end of the introduction the most important is submitted:
The social partnership cannot be, according to the structure of the partners, considered a firmly stabilised system of relations and bonds. It must be seen as a permanent process with participants varying in their composition (in the relationship with the development of the society and the knowledge) and their goals. As a consequence, securing the continuity of the bonds in the framework of the social partnership, considered to be

a permanently varying process, appears to be the most important conclusion.

As for assortment of the social partnership in practice the problem is solved on the school level (a school is the basic unit of the educational process), on the regional level (as a natural part of the country, influencing the structure of the school system) and on the state level (the state guarantees the standards and the system of education. The assortment of the social partnership is characterised by concerns, motivation, responsibility and competence on each of the levels.

It is suggested in the report:

1. The establishment of the school's council on the school level as an institution of the social partners with the participation of the state administration. This council can, but does not have to be legislatively regulated. It is necessary to define it loosely enough to secure the natural activity and the dialogue of the social partners.

2. On the regional level, it is recommended to establish a body able to take part in creating the conception of the vocational education and training, specification of the long term needs of the region (as for both the number and a profile of a graduate) and organise the participation in the final exams and in the control of the educational process.

3. The responsibility for strategic goals, for the financing of the whole process and for gathering and transferring the information is to be concentrated on the state level. We do recommend the co-operation with representatives of the main social partners, who are employers´ associations and organisations and the trade unions as a partner ensuring priorities having been agreed with employers before.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Michal KARPÍŠEK

Miroslav PROCHÁZKA
Jaroslav SVĚTLÍK

INTRODUCTION

Attention paid to the issues concerning quality and its evaluation in the area of education has been and still is increasing in most European countries. The quality of services education institutions offer has become one of the topical issues debated within the Czech education system as well. The main intention behind the focus on quality is to meet expectations and requirements on the part of the students and other "stakeholders" as regards the structure and standards of provision. Moreover, another objective, closely linked to the previous one, is to establish conditions for the efficient use of available resources. The focus on quality creates conditions for an on-going development of educational services provided by individual institutions. It drives them to respect the external environment and to communicate with the world around them. Fostering quality is becoming one of the essential components of the institutions' management and it supports their long-term strategic planning.

Quality evaluation thus involves activities aimed at assessing the extent to which an institution fulfils its educational goals, to what degree these goals correspond with the general demands placed on the relevant type and level of education, and to what extent the internal system and structure of the relevant provision as well as the system of communication with the outside world provide guarantees for further success in years to come. Specific objectives of quality evaluation may differ and may be influenced by various external circumstances under which the particular institution operates.

In a competitive environment where supply of educational opportunities exceeds demand, information provided to the general public is increasingly important. Consequently, such increased public awareness should indirectly influence the institutions' behaviour by means of preferences given to selected institutions. In an opposite case where demand is higher than supply, it is the perception of quality being the basic guarantee for the standards of education achieved that often gains importance. The role of the guarantor is most frequently taken up by the state through accreditation of educational services. Another possible objective of quality evaluation is a review of the quality of the institution's management and the efficiency in the use of funds - an audit. Therefore, evaluating and fostering quality is very closely associated with management, planning and information flows.

The aforementioned observations apply to the Czech vocational education as a whole as well as to the project of pilot schools within the Phare VET programme. In the Czech environment of the 1990s, the conditions for quality evaluation have been affected by significant changes in the perception of school management, in the structure and range of education offered and by other founders of education institutions entering into the system. A factor that is of primary importance in this context is the growing competition in the education market caused by expanding the institutions' capacity and, at the same time, by the downward tendency of the demographic curve. The situation in quality evaluation, however, in spite of the enormous attention paid to this area, is far from being optimal.

The project "Evaluation and Monitoring" within the Phare VET programme has attempted to summarize and review the existing findings gained during the implementation of the project of pilot schools within Phare VET. One of the intentions was to gather experience and facts that could be used within the broader context of vocational education in the Czech Republic. Moreover, the purpose of the project is also to view all these findings in terms of recommendations of previous, essential studies that dealt, at least partly, with the issues of Czech vocational education – "Strategic Study of Vocational Education and Training" compiled by an English consultancy company Birks Sinclair and Associates Ltd. in 1993, the background report of the Czech party prepared for OECD examiners in 1996 as well as follow-up reports of the OECD examiners. All the work on the "Evaluation and Monitoring" project has been divided up into eight parts each dealing with a different aspect of vocational education.

This report summarizes the results achieved by the evaluation group "Quality Evaluation". In addition to the aforementioned studies and documentation on the project of pilot institutions within Phare VET, information was drawn from personal experience and findings identified during visits to the pilot schools. Last but not least, further information was collected through training organized by the Centre for Further Training of Teachers under Masaryk University in Brno, through discussions with the participants, when reviewing their schools' "strategic plans" and through informal discussions with the schools' management. The group aimed primarily at the evaluation of the quality of provision, the awareness of the quality of education offered and at the aspects of management of vocational education institutions related to this subject, above all the issue of school marketing. On the other hand, the group did not address the issue of assessing the students' results as it is an issue, in the opinion of the group members, that is closely linked to the curriculum.

The group concentrated on two levels of the issues under review:

- the level of the system of quality evaluation and information flows
- the micro-level of individual pilot institutions and their experience from the Phare VET programme

Until recently, not much attention was paid to the issues of quality and its evaluation within the pilot schools' project. There were certain exceptions – a series of training for the pilot institutions' managers in school marketing. It was only recently that a seminar – rated as highly positive – was held that addressed the quality issues in greater detail. It is as yet uncertain to what extent it will impact upon the schools' further activities. It is therefore difficult to present any specific findings from the project in the given area, let alone discuss possibilities of applying the results on a larger scale. Conversely, as far as the issues of quality evaluation and school marketing are concerned, the situation at the pilot institutions within the Phare VET programme is similar to that in other secondary vocational schools, apprentice training centres and many higher vocational colleges.

The system of quality evaluation is, however, given significant space both in current debates concerning further development of Czech vocational education as well as in the aforementioned studies. It therefore appears to be more meaningful to address the system level in the first place, and follow up with a few comments on the findings gained from the pilot schools.

1. THE PILOT SCHOOLS PROJECT - THE CONTEXT

Let us first define, as a point of departure for the following text, the brief characteristics and objectives of the pilot schools project within the Phare VET programme. In compliance with the recommendations contained in the Strategic Study on Vocational Education", a project within the Phare programme has been under way in the Czech Republic since 1994 which was to test, in the form of an experiment on a selected sample of nineteen pilot schools, the application of some of the recommendations mentioned above. The main driver was the recommendation to postpone the final decision concerning vocational orientation of a secondary school student, to interconnect more efficiently various vocational study programmes and to ensure, to a certain extent, the possibility of transferring from one to another.

The primary attention within the project of pilot schools was given to the reform of their curricula. In co-operation with the Research Institute for Vocational Education (VÚOŠ), principal teaching material has been and still is being prepared. This material is innovative in the view of the possibility of transferring from apprentice training to secondary vocational education, which is primarily true of the initial years of study. The purpose of this approach is to enable first year students to get to know the broader context of a particular subject area and, consequently, choose a particular apprenticeship or study programme. This choice is influenced both by the preferences of the student and their parents and by their study results.

With regard to the priorities set, the project was aimed primarily at implementing changes in the pilot schools' curricula, and these changes were complemented by training for the schools' managers and teaching staff. The result came in the form of fundamental changes in the concept of education at some pilot schools including changes in the structure of studies with the use of modules. Other aspects of the pilot schools' management and development are planned to be addressed during further stages of the project.

The success of a possible application of positive experience from this experiment on a larger scale will then depend, apart from other things, on a relatively precise definition of outputs and on quality evaluation mechanisms being ready to be used. The previous experience from the overall development of the network of schools and from various other experiments points to certain negative aspects that a dramatic increase in the number of schools can bring about. A decrease in the original quality and "devaluation" of the original intention may, in case of an inappropriate quality evaluation mechanism, perhaps be one of them.

Since the beginning of the 1990's, the number of schools and study programmes in the area of secondary vocation education has been rising steadily. Such development has been caused mainly by the establishment of private schools, but also by the establishment of new state-owned schools. An essential change occurred in the overall concept of educational funding where the number of students became the principal criterion for acquiring funding from the state budget. Secondary vocational schools, be it the result of their systematic approach or intuition, are beginning to focus on subject areas for which there is the highest demand on the part of the public. A frequently criticised effect of this development has been the loss of comparability of the output levels of education. Is has perhaps been also the lack of information on study programmes offered and their quality that contributed to the overall lack of transparency of this expansion.

Fundamental changes have taken place also at the level of post-secondary vocational education where education after "maturita" (secondary school leaving examination) has been replaced since 1995 by higher vocational education (not a degree level). This type of education is offered by 164 higher vocational colleges all over the country. Many problems at this level of education are similar to those occurring in other sectors of vocational education. The very development of higher vocational education can serve as an example of the risk of "devaluation" of the original intentions in case of an uncontrolled expansion of an original experiment without setting up some principal parameters and mechanisms.

2. THE LEVEL OF THE SYSTEM OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

2.1. Output Standards

A necessary condition for an efficient evaluation of quality of provision is the setting up of a basic frame of reference to which all evaluation activities are related. The changes in the concept of managing education at the beginning of the 90s have brought about greater autonomy of schools in deciding about their curricula, and a change in the structure and scope of vocational education offered. What was seen as an important, positive development was the establishment of private entities in the area of education strengthening the competitive environment as well as introducing in the system various creative and innovative elements. These changes, however, have not been accompanied by a clear definition of any output levels, nor by a setting of minimum educational requirements.

This has led to a lower comparability of educational outputs at various schools both within a particular level of education and sometimes even between different levels of education. Moreover, individual certificates awarded upon graduation from particular study programmes fail to state their real worth and the public is getting lost in the spectrum of educational services on offer. At the same time, the non-existence of output standards complicates significantly the possibility of evaluating quality, for there is no general point of reference which such evaluation could lean up against.

The general, fundamental definition of outputs at the individual levels of vocational education should be laid down in the form of a law. Such general definition can be elaborated in a greater detail to provide standards for individual study fields. This activity should be commissioned to an agency/council for curriculum and certification whose establishment is recommended by all the aforementioned studies. It is beyond all doubts, that in the process of finalizing the formulation of the standards, all social partners in the sector of vocational education should have their say. The composition of the agency (council) should reflect this and so should do the composition of its steering bodies. Regarding this issue, several proposals of the Research Institute for Vocational Education (VÚOŠ) have been looked into and it is possible that it will be this institute that will become the foundation of such an institution. The VÚOŠ played this particular role in the pilot schools project within the Phare VET programme in defining study objectives and curricula for individual schools and subject areas.

However, the issue of defining and preparing standards was not in the centre of attention of the "Quality Evaluation" working group, and it has been worked out, in much greater detail and with more precision, by a separate working group. It is impossible, however, not to mention the importance of this issue for quality evaluation and the benefit the establishing of standards would have for this area.

2.2. Accreditation of Study Programmes

The first area of quality evaluation in which the setting of educational output standards must be reflected is recognition and inclusion of study programmes in the network of schools – i. e. their accreditation. In our opinion, distinction must be made between accreditation of a relevant study programme and its inclusion in the network at a particular school.

In the first case where accreditation of a study programme is concerned, the objectives, content and structure of the study programme under review are acknowledged as suitable and in line with general output standards used at the particular level of education.

This means, however, that teaching material is approved separately, without the knowledge of the particular environment in which the provision shall take place. If, however, the material under review does state the principal, generally valid conditions which must be established to ensure the required quality of provision, the follow-up in the form of assessing whether a particular school meets all necessary requirements is then much easier. This is true of both the aforestated accreditation of a study programme with the purpose of including it in the network, and of quality evaluation carried out later on.

It is beyond all doubts that all social partners must be involved (as external experts) in this evaluation as well, so that their expectations and requirements are met to a maximum degree. With regard to the anticipated involvement of external opponents in this issue and a discussion with representatives of various groups of stakeholders, it is absolutely necessary to prepare a relatively clearly defined methodology and, most importantly, a set of general objectives and requirements for the relevant level of education. It is well possible that, primarily due to the diversity of opinions and experiences of the individual opponents, there may be certain misunderstanding on their part (particularly in case of new approaches) and an overall distortion of the final evaluation may be the result. Based on both foreign and domestic experience, this process should take place by means of a debate within a group/committee of opponents on which various social partners will be represented. Although this process is rather costly, it seems more appropriate than the written assessment approach - used up until this time - on which the author of the proposal for a new subject area could not express their opinion, let alone discuss it. Regarding the need for a continuous innovation, schools must retain certain autonomy.

The most appropriate solution to this issue at the institutional level appears to be an inclusion of this activity within the purview of the aforementioned agency/council for curriculum and certification. Besides the setting of standards stated above, this institution could also co-ordinate work on a recommended curriculum for various study programmes within vocational education which the schools will be offered. Since it is impossible, however, to define one uniform way of achieving the generally set objectives of educational programmes, a certain space must be given to individual schools to develop their own activities in this area. After all, this approach is in line with the existing implications of the promoted liberalisation of education. Through accreditation of a study programme, the state retains its role of a guarantor of the objectives and content of education in the eyes of the public.

2.3. Accreditation of a Study Programme at School – Inclusion in the Network

"Accreditation of a study programme at school" is linked to the concept of accreditation discussed in the previous chapter, it is, nevertheless, somewhat different. It focuses primarily on the conditions established to ensure quality provision and a plan setting out ways in which these conditions shall be met in years to come. Contrary to the existing procedures, which do not waste time but are a little formal, we suggest that this assessment should take place on the school premises - as some previous experience has resulted in an opinion that evaluation of a study project without the knowledge of the specific school environment increases the risk of launching the project with inadequate support on the part of the school.

In this process - and the same is true of quality evaluation - various aspects of a school's operations are under scrutiny. Simply said, this is a mirror process to quality evaluation. Instead of using the school's results as the basis for evaluation, the proposals and ideas of the school on how it shall fulfil its mission and objectives are taken as a point of departure. The proposals are assessed not only in terms of their appropriateness, but also whether they are realistic. This assessment must be based on a certain degree of trust, as it is often very difficult to prove that the school is prepared to ensure quality provision in a longer term. On the other hand, the school commits itself, when it prepares the project and anticipates its accreditation, to run in a certain way its management and communication systems as well as to provide for personnel, technical and capacity issues. These commitments may be considered when the implementation of original ideas is evaluated later on.

Numerous aspects of adequate provision and the satisfying of at least minimum requirements set may be a subject to a debate. The participants in the debate should, of course, consist of the school representatives and a of commission of experts whose members can represent different viewpoints. In this case as well, the debate would benefit from a participation of various social partners. The specific procedures will very much depend on the extent to which the generally binding requirements for ensuring quality provision will be specific. In an extreme case - which is, of course, far from being optimal - a person may arrive in the school with the sole purpose of checking upon the required documentation and the list of equipment. In our opinion, there should be joint discussion between the school and the commission members who, due to their being able to see various problems from a certain distance, can assist the school in eliminating them or recommend alternative solutions. A refusal to include the subject area into the network is, in our opinion, an extreme solution only in case the school clearly has no idea on how to proceed further, or provides false data.

We believe that this should be a long-term process the nature of which will in many respects depend, apart from other things, on the school's experience gained so far and on quality evaluation of similar study programmes. It should be possible to grant "conditional" accreditation tied to the fulfilment of a few additional conditions. These conditions should be suggested by the accreditation commission as a result of debates held at the particular school and they should be included in the commission's report.

This accreditation activity is, by its nature and extent, closer to the quality evaluation as it is described below. This activity could therefore fall within the purview of an institution whose responsibility is to carry out quality evaluation - which is, at the moment, the Czech School Inspectorate (ČŠI). We realise that, in the event of enlarging the scope of activities of ČŠI or another, similar institution, it will be absolutely necessary to pay primary attention to the creation of a basic framework and criteria for such assessment. Moreover, a detailed methodology will have to be prepared and appropriate personnel found including external experts, co-operation with whom is highly recommended. These issues and funding of the process can be considered, in our view, as being critical.

The whole process, as described above, may appear too demanding and pointless. We believe, however, that it can facilitate minimisation of possible risks the schools take, contribute to a successful introduction of changes required in the system of quality evaluation, and ease the pressure for implementing conclusions drawn from results of evaluation processes leading, in an extreme case, to excluding schools from the network.

The pursuit of direct impact of the evaluation results upon the relevant school is, in terms of a general acceptance of external evaluation principles, strongly counter-productive and limits the possibility of joint discussion between the school and the evaluation body. We believe this is even more true of introduction of various innovative elements in the education system.

As far as funding is concerned, the possibility of transferring part of the costs to individual schools may be considered. Although this solution will not change the fact that the primary source of funds is the state budget, the participation of schools in covering the costs of the evaluation process may, however, result in an increased attention to the preparation of the relevant documentation as well as in careful deliberations on the readiness of the school to apply for and to undergo such evaluation.

When taking into account the demographic development, the upcoming reduction in the number of schools and increasingly tougher competition, it seems that the scope of accreditation activities should not be so large compared to the demands placed on evaluation processes. The role of the Ministry of Education as an administrative and policy-making body within the Civil Service lies, in such a system, in the right to make a final decision on (non)inclusion of a school in the network, in establishing basic conditions for the network development and in setting up parameters for efficient operation of schools as well as the relevant administrative and economic instruments. If the proposed approach is approved, there may be demands to amend the existing legislation governing the overall process of including schools in the network, mainly the setting of time restrictions for dealing with such applications.

The proposed approach is, as it is in the case of quality evaluation described below, one of progressive, developmental steps. In the long term, a different solution may be considered which would depend on the stage of development in which a particular school finds itself and on the degree of its autonomy. This solution would consist in limiting accreditation activities, and external evaluation should be focused primarily on the systems of institutional management and quality control - particularly organization, management and communication within the school. The school would be assessed in terms of its capability to co-ordinate all processes within the school in such a way that the result would be a minimisation of the risk of providing low quality services. This development is, to a great extent, in line with the world-wide trends in quality assurance both in the sector of services in general, and in the area of education. The alignment with this process on our part is, however, conditioned both by a gradual development and strengthening the autonomy of schools, and by certain variable parameters - primarily the size of the school, the room for the management function and its professionalisation, adequate material support etc.

2.4. Quality Assessment - Evaluation

Along with the growing competition in education and the efforts to make schools attractive for a sufficient number of prospective students, quality evaluation (evaluation of the activities and results of schools) will become increasingly important. This evaluation is based on the knowledge of specific data and results of the school's activities. For quality evaluation to function properly, it is necessary to set its objectives and to define a target group towards which the evaluation results are directed. There may be various target groups as well as objectives, as is stated in the introduction. The evaluation results may provide information to the public on the quality of individual schools, their study programmes or other services. Quality evaluation may be used as feedback by schools themselves and as a means of enhancing their quality. Quality evaluation may be initiated by the Ministry of Education in order to put an end to bad practice or to ascertain whether state resources are used efficiently. The subject of evaluation may be a study programme or institutional management (audit). These various objectives cannot be easily mixed up within one evaluation case, for they may require different procedures and methods.

Within the Czech vocational education, it is the Czech School Inspectorate that is in charge of quality evaluation and quality control. OECD experts in their report call the Inspectorate an "independent body of a semi-investigative nature" and suggest it should be transformed into an independent, public consultancy institution which would provide its services to various clients. If such a change is to be implemented, it is necessary to re-define the mission and principles the Inspectorate follow in their work. An anticipated implication of this transformation is also a necessary change in the management and decision-making structures resulting in the relevant involvement of social partners in these processes. There is another question that remains unanswered, which is to what extent such re-definition of this institution's mission would call for distinctions to be made between quality evaluation of general and vocational education. The outcome of discussions on this subject is the conviction that the aforementioned change would be beneficial and is necessary for further development of vocational education.

The Czech School Inspectorate gradually form their own procedures for addressing the issues of quality evaluation in vocational education. The non-existence of clearly defined standards to which the evaluation could be related contributes to a degree of uncertainty on the Inspectorate's part. Experience from the inspection work shows that even in cases where the results of evaluation point to significant shortcomings in the operations of certain schools (compared with general views of education), it is very difficult to argue and prove this. On the other hand, there may be opposite cases, where the school meets certain "non-defined" objectives, however, its unusual procedures and approaches result is the inspector's attempts to rank the particular school as of insufficient quality. There is also the traditional distrust of the Inspectorate on the part of the schools.

The work of the Inspectorate may be, in many respects, affected by various expectations in terms of using the evaluation results – we could use the word "assignments". In addition to quality evaluation, which should assist schools in enhancing the quality of their provision, the Inspectorate faces the tasks of a controlling body. As such, it should monitor how schools comply with various regulations and provisions – the results of such monitoring may impact upon the schools' existence. These two roles are not fully compatible and require different approaches.

The necessary step the Czech School Inspectorate is pursuing is the differentiation of the two roles mentioned above. It is clear that in order to perform the evaluation function, the Inspectorate will have to invite the relevant social partners - which is not true of the control function. Based on discussions at schools, it is clear that schools would prefer much more an evaluating body with a consultancy function. If this came to pass, great attention would have to be paid to the development of the Inspectorate staff.

The role of a controlling and supervising body may, in this situation, be played by the control department of the Ministry of Education. Gathering and maintaining data and their analysis present a necessary condition both for the decision-making on developmental and strategic plans of schools, and for evaluation of the quality of their work. Maintaining appropriate files thus becomes an integral part of the system of quality management and quality control of the individual schools and it is considered to be for their own benefit. It remains to be decided how to go about this, which is more or less a technical matter.

In order to ensure that quality evaluation is successful and objective to a maximum degree, the whole process must be rested on partnership of the two parties concerned, i. e. the school under scrutiny must be actively involved. The evaluation process should run more or less in the form of mutual discussions with the aim to help the school enhance its quality. Therefore it should not have any direct impact upon the school, at least not an immediate one. The demanded indirect pressure for further enhancement of quality may, primarily thanks to a strong competition, lead to publishing the evaluation results. This may force the weaker schools to attempt to reach standards comparable to those met by quality schools, for if they do not do so, potential students are likely to turn away from them.

The main starting point for external evaluation of quality is self-evaluation carried out by the school. In this process, the school assesses its own strengths and weaknesses and the extent to which it manages to fulfil its own goals. Many questions must be answered deriving from the data available concerning the organization and the actual course of studies (e. g. students' success rate), questions concerning internal and external communication and the use of feedback, students are asked whether their expectations are being met, the management and quality control systems are scrutinised etc. Only then, when the appropriate material in writing is ready as a result of self-evaluation, may external assessors arrive and use this document as the basis for their scrutiny, their discussions with the school staff and people from the surrounding community.

It is necessary, as it is in the case of accreditation, that quality evaluation is conducted by commissions consisting, apart from other experts, also of representatives of social partners. The reason is that evaluation must address a broad range of aspects of the school's activities. Evaluation should be regularly repeated. In the event of discovering serious inadequacies, new evaluation may be initiated within a short period of time the purpose of which would be to ascertain the way in which the shortcomings have been eliminated. Any possible administrative measures should follow only after this approach fails.

The issues concerning this concept of quality evaluation and its basic principles must be further explained as they do not always (in all schools) appear to be understood and accepted.

In addition to the activities of the Czech School Inspectorate or of a similar institution, other quality evaluation activities may be launched. Such development would be favourable as the plurality of views, criteria and approaches may result in a plurality of information sources and an increase in the public awareness of various aspects of quality in education. The purposes of these activities may range from providing a confidential information to the school so that it can see where it stands, what its strengths and weaknesses are, to "league tables" of schools compiled using various criteria and aimed primarily to serve the public. In any case, however, when presenting results of such evaluation activities to the public, it must be clearly explained which principles and criteria were used and what the objective of the evaluation was. If this condition is not met, various misunderstandings may occur.

For better understanding, an example of secondary schools' evaluation may be stated, as it was investigated by the Institute for Information in Education (ÚIV) within the SET '96 project. This project resulted in the compilation of many "league tables" where the secondary schools were ranked according to various criteria and parameters. One of the controversial issues was the inclusion in the tables of a rating of schools showing their graduates' success in being admitted to institutions of higher education. This was then criticised on the grounds that it is not to prepare students for higher education that is the main mission of secondary vocational schools. This view, however, was just one of many other ones presented to the public. Nevertheless, the fact that this project was the only one of its kind caused such misunderstandings to occur.

When considering foreign experience in this area, we may expect that various ad hoc evaluation mechanisms may as well serve as a source of information to the official ones. We may presume that the primary users of the results of such evaluation will be either the public or the schools concerned. However, it is possible that the results of some of these activities will be the source of inspiration and information for the Czech School Inspectorate.

As an example, a so called "meta-evaluation" (an indirect evaluation of quality) may be mentioned. The main principle of a meta-evaluation is a review of results of other evaluation processes the structure and parameters of which are then approved – by an inspection or another state body responsible for the evaluation – as satisfying the body's own requirements. The subject of meta-evaluation is, in other words, the very process of evaluation carried out within another, independent evaluation mechanism. This independent evaluation process is aimed at evaluating the quality of the school and of its educational offer, and the procedures, objectives and criteria used during this process then become subject to "meta-evaluation". If the "meta-evaluation" is positive, the inspection (or the relevant body) may use its outcomes and interfere only where powers within the ordinary evaluation mechanism do no reach. For better understanding, we may use an example of a school that is repeatedly found to be of low quality and unwilling to enhance the services criticised. It is the role of the state to put an end to wasting public resources and to find, together with the school, an appropriate solution.

Annual Reports

A valuable source of information on the quality of schools and their study offer are and will continue to be annual reports the compilation of which is required by law. Attention therefore should be paid to analyses of annual reports of individual schools. On the other hand, the role of these reports in informing the parties interested on the issues of quality must not be overestimated. There is no doubt that there are tendencies to present the school's strengths in these reports without necessarily mentioning possible problems. External evaluation of quality including self-evaluation is therefore indispensable.

In connection with quality evaluation, it is necessary to mention the frequently discussed requirement for comparability of final (school leaving) examinations, and, above all, for strengthening the external influence on their content and the way of running them. This issue is certainly addressed in the part devoted to curriculum.

2.5. Information

Information for the Public

The lack of public awareness on the quality and offering of our institutions providing education presents a problem which is only gradually being eliminated. The seriousness of this issue is even stressed when we realise that it is one of the main preconditions for the establishment of a properly functioning competitive environment and an indirect instrument motivating schools to enhance the quality of their work.

The education system still lacks mechanisms producing information on qualitative aspects of individual schools and their subject areas which could be used by prospective students when choosing their educational path. The rarity of such information complicates the existing situation even further as the impact of such "exclusive" information may be perceived by the schools as too strong. The SET programme organized by the Institute for Information in Education may serve as an example. The public cannot compare the outcomes of several different evaluation activities which may use different approaches. The existing evaluation mechanisms do not produce public information in any systematic way. Thus, there is a lot to be done in this area.

A suggestion to be considered in this area is a possible "start-up" support for a regular supplement to some of the Czech dailies that would be devoted to educational issues (there are many foreign examples – i. e. Times Education Supplement). This would create sufficient space for discussion on education, its problems and possible development. Most importantly, however, the supplement would serve as a means of acquainting the public with up-to-date information including that on quality issues. The existing specialist magazines certainly fulfil, to a certain extent, the task of a medium for exchanging information and experience. Their mission, however, pre-determines them to address only a small group of experts. These periodicals also fail to manage, due to the same reason, to attract the attention of various social partners who should be invited to join the discussions.

The information on quality and studies offered must be available to all the parties interested, primarily to prospective students and their parents. Without such information, the effect of quality evaluation is significantly weakened, as those concerned may not use it to help them in their decision-making. Decisions made by students regardless of quality evaluation results then fail to become the instrument for exerting pressure on schools to improve their quality and efficiency.

Information for the Education System

Another aspect of fostering quality and of long-term planning is the work with relevant data and prognoses. In this area, it is the Institute for Information in Education that has gradually been gathering the background information and resources. Its activities are appreciated, among others, by the OECD examiners in their report – nevertheless, they recommend that the institute should concentrate its further efforts primarily on the area of prognoses and analyses. The possible existence of such services and their appropriate promotion could assist schools in their decision-making and planning activities in the sense that they could base their plans on objective data and thus improve their school marketing. This situation, however, is still far from being a reality, as the management of schools do not have the chance to find out about information output, data and materials that the Institute may provide.

In this respect it is necessary to mention the issues concerning gathering and processing exact data from the education system as a whole. The most serious problem here is of technical nature. According to a survey conducted by the ÚIV in 1996 in all secondary schools, personnel data is kept manually (without the use of IT) at 16% of schools and in the case of student data, it is at as many as 28% of schools. The remaining schools use various software which is not always compatible. It is planned that, in the near future, a new information system should be introduced which would provide means for gathering data on personnel, organization and study issues, on attractiveness of various study programmes, study results, employment of graduates etc. Regarding this fact, it will be useful for the schools to acquire systems that would make it possible to transfer their relevant data without any difficulties. This, however, creates the need for supporting the schools' efforts in this area and for facilitating their smooth transfer to modern IT. One of the possibilities of doing so is that of setting minimum requirements for compatible data interfaces and accreditation of suitable software which the schools will then be recommended.

3. MICRO-LEVEL – EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOLS

It is difficult to provide any information on the issues of quality evaluation and school marketing at the level the pilot schools. We have already stated that the bulk of this extensive work was done in the area of curriculum. The corresponding activities in the area of school marketing and quality evaluation are being prepared or have been carried out only recently. We therefore believe that similar conclusions to those that apply to a large number of other secondary vocational schools apply also to the pilot schools. Certain opinions and claims are based on visits to pilot schools and discussions with people who have had the opportunity to get acquainted with the schools' activities in the relevant areas of school management.

It is necessary to give credit to the schools for the work they have already done. Such difficult work and changes could not have been carried out without great enthusiasm on the part of the schools' staff, without the necessary co-ordination and co-operation. The very participation of a school in the project means that the staff must have debated the future development of the school and must have planned for the future in some way. At the same time we believe, however, that most management of schools base their work on the issues of quality, planning and development on their intuition (which is the case of other secondary schools as well). Their acts are influenced by the management structure and by the extent to which the management is busy dealing with operational issues. The activities of schools depend in many respects on the personality of the principal, other managers and on their enthusiasm, as well as on the involvement of other staff members in the relevant discussions. What plays a certain role here is also the position of the school, its size and problems it must face.

It is beyond doubt that there are certain differences between the pilot schools at the level of management in general and in terms of progress made in the areas under review. It is therefore not easy to make any generalisations. An overwhelming majority of these issues fall within the area of management which has been addressed in a separate part of the "Evaluation and Monitoring" project within the Phare VET programme. Despite this we shall attempt to summarize briefly the information collected at schools concerning the areas of quality evaluation, strategic planning, school marketing and information systems.

3.1. Strategic Planning, School Marketing

Management of most schools do not as yet accept the need for strategic planning of the school's development. It must be said that these issues were, to a degree, explained and clarified during a series of seminars devoted to school marketing organized within the Phare VET programme. Although the overall response to these seminars was rather ambivalent, they have contributed to a better understanding of these issues and, in some cases, have resulted in drafting good quality strategic and marketing plans. Principals and their managers think and debate about their schools' future. However, their reflections on the future often lead to adopting decisions based more likely on their intuition than on outcomes of any systematic data processing and analyses.

These decisions may point in the right direction, however, their implementation may be inefficient due to the non-existence of any comprehensive system. The recognition of the need for planning of the main course of the school's further development encounters the need for acquiring new knowledge, skills and, most importantly, new approaches – something that the series of seminars was intended to address. The main obstacle to changing the approach is the fact that the possible benefits of long-term planning for the school is underestimated. Long-term planning is sometimes even resisted as relics of the past era. On the other hand, it cannot be said, that the concept of planning is unknown to the schools. Schools do engage in operational planning to a various extent, in some cases management prepare "tactical" plans. This, however, gives rise to the aforementioned inefficiency of many activities, the very reason for which is the unclear or non-existent long-term plan for development.

The schools' management do not conduct any systematic surveys with the purpose of collecting information necessary for their decision-making. An analysis of the environment, opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses is for many schools the starting point in their reflections about future possibilities. A question remains whether an account is taken in these reflections of the broader context, and to what extent the relevant data covering this broader context is available.

Schools' principals see as one of the main threats the strong competition of other secondary schools in the relevant catchment area, competition which becomes apparent in the number and quality of pupils applying for admission to their schools. Many pilot schools changed or expanded their offering of study programmes in the past few years in order to make it more attractive for prospective students. These decisions are based more likely on intuition rather than on proper analyses and prognoses, let alone on a strategic plan. This is, undoubtedly, significantly influenced by a degree of uncertainty regarding the future development of the relevant professions in industry and the employment of graduates. On the other hand, contacts and links to the industry and to regional institutions are one of the main strengths of these schools. These contacts serve as a valuable source of information on anticipated requirements for particular qualifications. A frequently mentioned threat to further development of schools is the inappropriate legislation and the non-existence of an integrated policy for the development of vocational education.

The schools also vary as to the extent to which they specify the data and resources for evaluating their strengths and weaknesses. A lot of problems result from the failure of some schools to make use of their internal communication systems and to obtain feedback. Making a summary of the pilot schools' strengths and weaknesses is again quite difficult as they are different at each school. In general, there is perhaps no problem regarding the capacity for further development. The schools differ in their opinions on the necessary equipment and facilities - requirements of some schools in this area are unrealistic. On the whole, the most critical issue is how and where to find quality teaching staff - a success depends on the location and profile of the particular school.

The schools' management structure is traditionally rather hierarchical. In several schools, powers are delegated to a number of deputy managers, in other ones the whole management function is performed by one person. If the latter is the case, there is no wonder that such managers are overburdened with work. Again, the non-existence of long-term objectives and ideas on further development of the school for a three-to-five-year period can be seen as a certain weakness. If a school does have such a plan, it is rather an exception.

3.2. Internal Information Systems

Schools must maintain their data to comply with the provisions of the Schools Act. The ways of doing so differ - as we have already stated, some schools use computers, some do not. Most schools do not use internal communication and do not gather relevant data that could assist them in looking into their problems. The way in which management obtains feedback from the teaching staff is, most of the time, reduced to verbal communication without any systematic approach. A negligible number of schools conduct surveys and use questionnaires. The schools explain their negative attitudes to these forms of evaluation by stressing certain risks of, for example, distorted outcomes, and they do not realise that it is good and qualified preparation of these processes that eliminate these risks at the very beginning. A survey conducted by means of questionnaires given to both teachers and students can provide, on the condition it is carefully managed, a lot of valuable information. The method whereby students anonymously fill out questionnaires is mostly rejected. According to the statements of several principals, even their students are uninterested in this form of co-operation. At some schools, students can raise their voices through student councils - this method is, again, used in a minimum number of cases.

Regarding the fact that the students at the pilot schools have not yet completed the experimental study cycle, we can only speculate on their employment after graduation. As for information from graduates outside the experiment, in most cases there is no systematic way of collecting their comments, opinions and suggestions - all information graduates provide is gathered through random conversations.

3.3. External Communication of Schools

Communication with the public is given more and more attention partly because of the growing competition and partly because the management of schools have become more experienced in this area. The ways in which schools keep in touch with the public and the extent to which they do so differ. In some cases we could question the cost-efficiency of a printed advertisement, on the other hand there are schools that have promotion material of high quality and know precisely how to use it. Differences also result from different perceptions of the importance and demands behind professional promotion of a school and its services. There is very often a good intention which, in its effect, fails to reach the target group.

All schools organise "open-door days", take part in various regional fares of study opportunities and exhibitions on a particular subject. Contacts to the press are scarce, in some cases regional press is used covering the particular catchment area. However, the schools themselves, apart from a few exceptions, do not have a comprehensive communication strategy.

There is no common promotion organized for the pilots schools within the Phare VET programme. Each school tackles its own promotional activities independently. This is certainly determined also by the schools' locations. However, one of the problems we came across during the school visits was the way in which the experimental nature of the studies was perceived. The public do not often acknowledge the specifics of the experiment and view the schools as ordinary, integrated secondary schools. It is possible that this issue will be on the agenda of the Association of Pilot Schools that is now being set up.

3.4. Internal Quality Assessment

Internal evaluation of quality in Czech vocational education has yet not been properly addressed. The reason is that, in spite of out-spoken declarations of interest in quality and its evaluation at the level of the system, there was almost no action taken to pursue these statements. The schools' management often do not find this activity as beneficial for them, the involvement of students in quality evaluation is often refused, and – as we have already mentioned – there are some opinions that not even the students show any interest in such co-operation. The importance of having an internal information system and of obtaining feedback is also perceived ambiguously. A systematic monitoring of quality indicators is rather an exception. Some data, however, is not available yet, depending on which stage of development the relevant school finds itself in. Some as yet unclear issues in the area of quality evaluation should be addressed at a seminar for the pilot schools' managers organized within the Phare programme. It is possible that the seminar will result in an increased interest on the part of the schools in various quality evaluation activities and, gradually, contribute to the implementation of more substantial changes in this area. Several schools have already introduced some elements of internal evaluation of quality. In general, however, there is no external mechanism that would force the schools to take such steps. Moreover, in spite of an overall support declared for these processes, the schools may have the impression that the whole issue has not been adequately explained to them and clarified, and there is a lot of misunderstanding concerning the management and quality control functions.

The management of many schools being overburdened with various tasks have not as yet considered the benefits of evaluation and self-evaluation for the quality of their services. Only a few schools engage in some sort of evaluation of their internal system and their teachers' work. The only tangible output of evaluation of quality of teachers' work is, in most cases, a "personal bonus" – an additional amount of money to their pay. Only a certain number of schools employ an appraisal system of some sort based on interviews or written assessment. Relatively few schools evaluate systematically the work of subject groups. As it is the case of the issues discussed earlier, also in this case a lot depends on the activities, personality and priorities of the principal and other staff.

Contacts to the industry and the two-way communication between the schools and businesses have already been underlined as being very good. Not only do these contacts make it possible to find appropriate placements for students during their practical training periods, they also contribute to discussions about the profile of a graduate, curriculum, organization of various profession-oriented events and of life-long learning programmes.

It is also the external evaluation of quality that is viewed by the schools with a certain disrespect. Such attitudes are the result of the very formal evaluation procedures used up until this time stressing mainly the administrative aspects of the matter. On the other hand, it is desirable – and many schools would welcome the change – that the inspection work should aim at assisting the schools in developing their quality through professional discussions and consultancy. As we have mentioned earlier in the text, the mission of the

Czech Schools Inspectorate must be re-defined and all the associated problems eliminated, if this suggestion is ever to be implemented. There is also the traditional view of the inspection as an instrument of rigid, external control.

It was the external pressure that, in certain foreign systems, supported the growth of awareness of the necessity to introduce self-evaluation as one of numerous processes within a school. The gradual building of the internal and external systems of quality management and quality control then made it possible to increase the schools' autonomy. This is why we believe that considerable effort should be put into explaining to the schools all the benefits of such processes, all "stakeholders" and social partners should become involved in the evaluation, and conditions should be established for the gradual building of internal control and evaluation systems.
The objective of self-evaluation is to analyse the school's activities and to find their strengths and weaknesses. This enables the schools, as a follow-up, to concentrate on eliminating the shortcomings found. The subjects of self-evaluation are, primarily, the way of securing internal and external communication, the shaping of the profile of a graduate in individual subject areas, the mechanism of incorporating the profile into the curriculum, the organisation of provision, the development of studies in terms of personnel, material and capacity, links and inter-connection between individual parts of studies, services to students, the ways of minimising the risk of student failure, the efficiency of management and planning processes etc.

An introduction of a more systematic approach to internal management and quality evaluation means new duties in addition to those the management of schools perform currently. The chance of improving these systems depends, in many respects, on the situation of each particular school, on the work load of its staff, and, no doubt, on the school's size and its management structure. It may be expected that the programme aimed at the optimisation of the schools' network currently under way (the objective of which is to support the creation of larger entities) could assist in further professionalisation of the management and planning functions at schools. A systematic care of quality as an integral part of the management function may be a result of this process. In this connection, we believe it would be worth investigating whether principals and managers of schools do have the appropriate space to perform their management functions. This issue is, however, the subject of a separate part of the "Evaluation and Monitoring" project devoted to management.

In any case, training for the relevant staff and facilitation of mutual exchange of experience would considerably assist the schools in their efforts to introduce some of the aforementioned elements in their regular activities. The changes taking place within the network of schools, the pressure for an efficient use of resources as well as the efforts to secure a stable, strong position of the schools in the education market will undoubtedly stress the importance of these issues even further.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides only a brief summary of individual suggestions or ideas, as they are, including their justification, the subject of the previous chapters. Many of these suggestions concerning further development of the areas of quality evaluation and school marketing are based on suggestions included both in the "Strategic Study on Vocational Education and Training" and in the recommendations put forward by the OECD examiners.

a) definition of output standards for individual levels of education and subject areas

The necessity to define requirements for the output of individual levels and types of education is derived not only from the need for their comparability, but also from the need to establish a clearer framework for the evaluation of the quality of documentation proposing new study programmes. The current situation is rather non-transparent, school leaving certificates increasingly fail to provide any valuable and comparable information. It is difficult to argue about the quality of output as it is not precisely defined as well as to question various inadequacies both in new proposals and in evaluation of the existing results.

The recommended solution, which is in line with the conclusions of previous studies, is to establish general output levels by means of law – the responsibility for their elaboration into the form of standards should be given to the agency/council for curriculum and certification. This institution must co-operate with all relevant social partners of vocational education. The possible basis for the establishment of this agency may be the Research Institute for Vocational Education which has long been engaged in various professional activities.

b) modifications to the accreditation of study programmes

As concerns evaluation of draft vocational education projects, we recommend to clarify and define more precisely the mechanism for their approval. We suggest to divide this process into two stages:

1. accreditation of study programmes
2. accreditation of study programmes with respect to the relevant school environment (inclusion of the subject area into the network)

1. Accreditation of study programmes in this case means recognition of their output, content and structure as being appropriate and in line with generally defined requirements for the particular level of education. We suggest that this activity should fall within the purview of the aforementioned agency/council for curriculum and accreditation. This institution would be involved in two types of activities:

    q drawing up their own proposals for curricula that would be available to schools

    q approving alternative proposals for study programmes worked out by other institutions – i. e. assessing to what extent their objectives, content and structure meet the general requirements

Regarding the need for innovation and adjusting the proposals to regional needs, schools must retain certain space for their own changes and modifications. In the area of approving submitted proposals we recommend to define a clear procedure including opponent proceedings and discussion of the author of the proposal with the commission of opponents. Relevant social partners should be represented on the commission.

2. We suggest considering possible changes to the existing mechanism for including study programmes into the network, consisting in the assessment of the particular project in terms of the future development and the way in which the provision is secured. This will require adding to the existing evaluation procedures a visit to the respective school. If this suggestion is approved, changes will be possibly required to the relevant legislation as the time limit for approval proceedings would thus be prolonged. On the other hand, this could be the way of minimising the risk of problems with quality and securing the provision later on. The assessment should be done by a group of experts. Co-ordination and the appropriate methodology can, in our opinion, be provided by the particular body that is responsible also for regular quality evaluation. The body concerned is, at the moment, the Czech School Inspectorate – which would, however, have to amend their current activities to be able to embrace this new one as well.

c) changes in the perception of evaluation of quality in education

The main emphasis as far as the care of quality is concerned, we believe, should be given to the building of a system of external evaluation of quality. This process must be based on the following:

q independence
q active involvement in the process of the school under review – self-evaluation must be the cornerstone of the evaluation process
q minimisation of the direct impact of the evaluation results on the relevant school
q all participants in the process must be treated as partners so that openness and mutual discussion is ensured
q involvement of social partners in the evaluation process
q publishing the evaluation results so that schools are pressurized to enhance their quality and to get involved in all the related activities
q clearly defined objectives of quality evaluation and the roles of the individual parties involved, clearly set evaluation criteria and methodology (in advance)

The process of quality evaluation is currently the responsibility of the Czech School Inspectorate. Their activities, however, are often affected by the lack of clear of objectives and procedures. This fact causes the schools to assume negative attitudes to this external evaluation. It is therefore necessary that the mission of this institution should be clarified and its structure and working methods should be adjusted to the newly defined mission. The Czech School Inspectorate is gradually working on these changes.

d) support for other, independent quality evaluation mechanisms

It is desirable that, in addition to the official evaluation of quality, there should be other evaluation mechanisms set up. Some of them may be directed primarily towards the public, other ones may assist schools in developing the quality of their services. Such plurality of views may help increase the overall awareness of the situation in the education market. Consideration, however, must be given to the interpretation of the objectives and results of such processes. It is not impossible that, in some cases, the procedures and results of these mechanisms will be accepted by an official evaluation body which can then concentrate primarily on the quality of these evaluation processes.

e) increasing the public awareness

If the care of quality is to be intensified, it is necessary that the public get sufficient information on the quality of the education on offer. Besides a greater emphasis on making public the results of individual evaluation processes, we believe it is worth considering to enlarge the space given to education in certain media. Our specific proposal concerns the creation of an education supplement to one of the daily newspapers. The attention currently given to issues related to education and to the discussion on its further development is, as compared to foreign experience, inappropriate.

f) integration of the system of collecting and processing data

The growing demands placed on schools in terms of planning their future and the development of the whole system require access to the relevant data and analyses based on which qualified decisions can be made. The current situation in this area, despite great efforts to move it forward, is far from being optimal. We believe that schools must be granted better access to basic data and precision of this data must be better ensured. In this respect, technical obstacles to further development in data processing and transfer must be removed, primarily by means of support given to the use of modern technology.

g) support to the development of the management function in the areas of planning and quality evaluation at schools

Schools and their management put great efforts into thinking about their future development. Despite this fact, planning in many schools is done non-systematically and randomly. This is caused by the management staff being overburdened with day-to-day tasks, and also by lack of information, and by their attitude to long-term planning. Many schools do not give proper care to various management issues, to quality evaluation, to the collection of relevant data and to strategic planning that would be based on analysing this data. The extent to which schools communicate with the outside world differs as well. We believe, that, if quality is to be enhanced, the process of external evaluation of quality must be based on self-evaluation, and further improvement of management skills of the managing staff must be supported by means of training and mutual exchange of experience. The programme of optimisation of the schools' network could become a good starting point for further professionalisation of the management function in our schools.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT/ INTERNATIONALISATION

Jana HENDRICHOVÁ

František BARTÁK
Jitka ZÁRUBOVÁ

INTRODUCTION – DEFINITION OF ISSUES EXAMINED

The topic of the Phare VET programme evaluation component "Research and Development/Internationalisation" in fact consists of two sets of issues. The first one relates to research and development in vocational education. As suggested in the task description, which was gradually refined, the issues relate first to the research and development which preceded or paralleled the work on the Phare VET programme and second the research and development of vocational education and related issues (e. g. its links with the labour market, other levels and types of education, and the like) as a whole. The authors undertook to assess the extent to which the research and development carried out so far responds to the needs of vocational education and the mutual interaction between the two areas of research. The authors also attempted to identify the desirable future focus of research and development of vocational education. The evaluation naturally focused, among others, on research studies prepared in collaboration with foreign experts. The research team concentrated on recommendations of research studies.

Due attention was paid also to the conditions of development and innovation at the level of schools and to the related support systems, as the discussion to the preliminary version of the study has shown that the support to research and development which is realised at lower than central level (mainly within the schools themselves) as well the understanding of the need of such support is possibly at present unsatisfactory in the country.

The research team also paid attention to the organisation and contents of research and monitoring of the labour market and the use of this type of information for the development of vocational education and training in the Czech Republic.

At the same time, the overall contacts of the Czech Republic with the main trends of the development of vocational education and training and their research abroad – mainly within international organisations: the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – were examined. Specific stress was placed on our involvement in the work of these organisations.

In order to clarify the term "research and development of education and training", we utilise the OECD definition:

"Educational R&D is the systematic, original investigation or inquiry and associated developmental activities concerning: the social, cultural, economic and political context within which education systems operate; the purposes of education; the process of teaching, learning and personal development; the work of educators; the resources and organisational arrangements to support educational work; the policies and strategies to achieve educational objectives; and the social cultural, political and economic outcomes of education."
(Standard Practice for Surveys of Research and Experimental Development – the

"Frascati Manual")

To proceed with the conceptualisation of this topic, the publications Education Research and Development. Trends, Issues and Challenges (Paris, OECD 1995) and Knowledge Bases for Education Policies (Paris, OECD 1996) have been used.

The topic of internationalisation relates directly to the linkage with foreign resources and practice mentioned above. Simultaneously the role of the Phare VET programme in transferring foreign experience was evaluated. The team has at the same time dealt also with the evaluation of foreign contacts of the pilot schools and of the Czech vocational schools in general.

Recommendations of this component of the Phare VET programme evaluation focus primarily on the identification of supplementary topics for research and development and the improvement of its co-ordination and organisation, including the necessary human, financial and institutional resources. They also focus on the improvement of mutual links between the decision makers and research, which is very important.

The readers should be aware that due to the constraint on the extent of the report, the citations from individual research programmes and works as well as other sources must be limited. We try to refer only to the most important ones in this report.

1. EVALUATION OF PILOT SCHOOLS EXPERIENCE

1.1 Research on the Issues of the Phare VET Programme

The Phare VET programme is directly and indirectly influenced by the experience acquired in the course of work on other research programmes and projects in the Czech Republic proper, as well as in collaboration with foreign institutions. This is due to the fact that the experts involved in the fulfilment and monitoring of this programme, in the Research Institute of Vocational Education but also elsewhere, are directly involved in all important vocational education research projects or act as the co-ordinators thereof. The respective programmes and projects will be taken up in the subsequent sections of this report. At this point mention should be made first of all about the Strategic Study of Vocational Education and Training (Birks Sinclair and Associates Ltd., 1993), which has been thus far the most comprehensive study on the Czech (as well as Slovak) situation in vocational education and training. This study was prepared within the Phare programme - Labour Market Restructuring, jointly by foreign experts and the Czech professional public (primarily the Education Research Institute in Bratislava and the

Research Institute of Vocational Education in Prague as well as other concerned partner institutions and individuals). It suggested to select pilot schools, which would in a decentralised manner in collaboration with professional commissions prepare new curricula. The project was supposed to involve a training of the pilot schools teachers. The managerial centre was supposed to determine only the guidelines and to provide technical assistance for this project.
The Phare VET pilot school programme Reform of Vocational Education is a follow up to this proposal, which it gradually fulfils. According to the Programme Report of September 1996 (Kirsten Tejsner) the goal of the programme will not be attained "if the final results are limited only to 19 pilot schools. The evaluation of the programme results is to encompass recommendations concerning the short and long term strategic goals supplemented by an operational plan" (p. 2). In order to implement these goals "it is necessary to procure collaboration from the respective ministries, the Research Institute of Vocational Education, pedagogical centres and social partners. In fact it will only be possible to accomplish these goals through direct participation of key persons in the committees and bodies involved in the programme". (Ibid.)

The very project of the Phare VET programme evaluation may be seen as a partial fulfilment of the conditions for the implementation of the goals of the programme. Through the project a wide range of professionals become involved in the programme from various partners areas (the Ministries of Education and Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry for Regional Development, employers, trade unions and other professional public), of whom many have not participated in it before and were lacking information on it. The involvement of students plays an important educational role with positive prerequisites as concerns the provision of young human resources and the basics of research on vocational education and training. Research work in various areas is carried out within the framework of this project, which will undoubtedly yield the required recommendations. The indisputable significance in this sense has also the reconstruction of the management board of the programme, which now includes most of the interested partners.

In this respect let us mention briefly the importance of the Strategic Study of Vocational Education and Training for further development of vocational education as such and of the Phare VET programme. This study presented the first comprehensive view of the issues of vocational education and training after the political turn-over in 1989. It proceeds from its detailed characteristics and considers the external social, economic and political conditions. It sees the advantages of the present model of vocational education and training (i. e. at the beginning of the nineties) in quite efficient operation of the educational system and the suitability of its structuring into three types of institutions, as well as in the respect enjoyed by the final secondary school examination and the apprenticeship certificate. (It must be however noted that at present, several years later, one of the problems is low comparability of secondary education final examinations, as a result of the overall decentralisation of the decision-making process in education after 1989.)

As disadvantages are concerned the various goals of secondary technical schools and secondary apprentice schools, which seemingly assume strictly different types of jobs, the

narrow specialisation of schools, the necessity to choose specialisation very early and the consequent limited options for transfer to another school or field during the studies, the very rigid syllabi. The strategic study further contains a negative mention of the lack of opportunities for post-secondary studies other than at the institutions of higher learning and lack of life-long learning opportunities, limited response to the needs of the present and future labour market, the scattered nature of vocational education among various sectors, limited involvement of employers in the preparation of study programmes and in the financing of vocational education, etc.
Though some statements and recommendations in the Strategic Study are at present considered obsolete (Tejsner, 1996) the Study undoubtedly pointed out the basic disadvantages of the vocational training system and outlined the remedies, which are today tested at pilot schools, but also in further vocational education – see e. g. the emergence of various transitory types of schools, increased flexibility of the curricula, higher transferability among study programmes, individual choice of the educational path (thus far to a limited extent), increasing participation of employers and other partners in vocational education in general, etc. and lastly the integration of the systems of vocational education and training at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. For objective (external to the school) reasons thus far has not been implemented the e. g. proposal for increased financial contribution of employers to vocational training. Also the preparation for life-long learning already at the early stages of education, or the general implementation of the modular system in vocational education, but also the establishment of councils for certification or qualification or the establishment of a centre for curriculum development is still not completely fulfilled. (However, the Ministry of Education is preparing at present the constitution of an Advisory Council on Curriculum Development, in which all social partners are to be represented.)

The fact that the Strategic Study was prepared by foreign experts in close collaboration with Czech (and Slovak) professionals contributed to the high quality of the Study and at the same time the broad professional public was made aware of the modern approaches to the issues at hand applied in developed countries as well as of the knowledge and experience in these countries. It was already through this study that the requirement materialised for a confrontation of our vocational education with the situation in developed countries, which was then further implemented especially in the pilot schools programme (direct testing of foreign experience in a sample of schools.)

1.2 International Collaboration of Pilot Schools

It is also at the level of individual schools where internationalisation is being carried out. Most pilot schools have already signed an agreement with a partner foreign institution, which usually has similar specialisation. It is only good that these partner institutions are often post-secondary institutions – e. g. various types of colleges in Ireland, Great Britain and Denmark, hoger beroepsonderwijs – HBO in the Netherlands and the like (for more information see Annex 1). The objective is that the experience obtained from collaboration with foreign institutions benefits the contents and organisation of teaching, as well as its individual participants – teachers, practical training supervisors and the pupils and that it contributes to better understanding of the demands on professional education in the EU countries by our schools as well as to the approximation of our education standards to the conditions in developed countries.

This bilateral collaboration between various schools has different profiles: e. g. The Integrated Secondary School – the Centre for Practical Training in Sezimovo Ústí and the Secondary Textile Industry School as well as the Secondary Apprentice School both in Ústí nad Orlicí plan to establish School Based Enterprises. The Integrated Secondary School – the Centre for Practical Training in Frenštát pod Radhošt_m plans to make use of the collaboration for the management of the school hotel. In these cases the collaboration involves practical training and its harmonisation with school-based teaching. Another type of collaboration consists in the establishment of a consultancy centre at partner schools and the subsequent exchange of experience (Secondary Machine Engineering School in Brno).

The other schools focus on the education of a student and training of teachers abroad for languages and professional competence, the pedagogical training of teachers and their in-service training, the formulation and evaluation of teaching plans, curriculum, development of textbooks, the exchange of teaching aids. Some schools will undertake the review and comparison of foreign examinations and collaboration will also focus on the establishment of generally applicable entrance standards. Another area of collaboration is devoted to the issues of school management (management structures, democratic decision-making, devolution of responsibilities and the like) and the definition of an optimum structure and role of the school board.

The co-operation also focuses on the development of a modules system of teaching at our schools, the development of teaching methods and curricula for adult education – in which stress should be placed on Cupertino with local industry and other social partners.

As concerns the activities in the fields of computer technology, the issue is to employ this technology in teaching, to utilise the Internet and to develop long-distance education of adults. Computing technology is looked at with interest as concerns its application for the management of the school institution.

Some schools focus in the course of bilateral collaboration on the establishment of regional education centres and the development of human resources from the perspective of life-long learning within the region.

Most of these initiatives are orientated by the endeavour to bring the teaching programmes in the pilot schools closer to the needs of students entering the labour market and the requirements of life-long learning. The programmes are supposed to teach the students flexibility, entrepreneurial spirit and decision making capacity. Our schools are supposed to learn how to assess and utilise the experience of foreign institutions and to learn along with these institutions how the linkage operates between the societal demand and the supply of education programmes.

At present, when the bilateral collaboration between pilot schools and their partner institutions has only just started it is neither possible to evaluate the real fulfilment of its goals, nor desired transfer of their experience to other schools. Undoubtedly, however, if our as well as foreign schools take this collaboration, which at any rate is at the level of individual institutions highly motivating, sufficiently seriously, there may occur a much more effective transfer of foreign experience, as compared with the communication thereof from the centre. This has already been the case in the project of post-secondary vocational education, which was initiated in 1990 and has been based since the very outset on close collaboration among Czech and foreign schools.

2. UTILISATION OF FOREIGN EXPERIENCE

Apart from the already cited Strategic Study and bilateral projects for individual pilot schools, which will undoubtedly also have a multiplier effect, Czech vocational education is also influenced by other projects prepared with the collaboration of international experts and also the experiences of developed countries mediated by international organisations (especially the EU and OECD) and acquired increasingly through literature, participation of our experts in international conferences and seminars, Phare supported projects, which implement the policy of EU and the like. The Czech Republic is increasingly involved in joint projects with international organisations for vocational education and training.

Europe-wide activities controlled by the European Commission in Brussels and the European Training Foundation in Turin play an essential role in international programmes and projects in vocational education. These include primarily all Phare programmes in this field, the Leonardo da Vinci programme, the Observatories programme and others.

The distinguishing feature of these international programmes is their mutual links and their mutually complementary role with national activities. Due to these mutual links international initiatives are relatively well accepted and supported by the respective ministries, which establishes the basis for their implementation.

In view of the fact that these initiatives are already numerous and a comprehensive overview thereof herein would be neither clear nor justified, we shall limit ourselves only to the most important ones.

The Czech Republic is already quite well connected to the information systems of international organisations. The Observatory project, organised by the European Foundation for Vocational Training – ETF in Turin, has started its activities and is hosted, in our country, by the National Training Fund. A team of professionals connected to the Observatory works on a national report on the Czech vocational training system. The Institute for Information on Education hosts an office of the

European information Network Eurydice (part of the EU Socrates programme). Czech experts are involved in the b[illegible] of consultants to ETF.

The basic documents on vocational education and training and the education policy as such are being translated and will be published. From among OECD documents this concerns specifically the publication Lifelong Learning for All (1996). The Research Institute of Vocational Education is currently preparing a summary publication, based especially on the literature concerning vocational education and training published by the OECD during the past two to three years.

The Czech edition is being prepared of the EU White Paper on Education and Training (1996) and the summary thereof has been already made available to the Czech public through the Phare VET programme and the Research Institute of Vocational Education. In 1996 there was already published the book Vocational Education in the European Community (Odborné vzdělávání 1996), in which were made available to the Czech readership the Commission Memorandum on Vocational education in EU in the nineties as well as the results of the debate thereon.

The said books were published with support from the Phare RES programme (Reform of the Education System) and its component Access to Documents.

As concerns the projects with the involvement of Czech and foreign specialists which, as already shown, exert the most significant influence of the transformation of our education system, it is necessary to mention first of all the joint OECD – Czech Republic project on the evaluation of the Czech educational policy. It resulted in OECD recommendations for the Czech education system, discussed in a joint conference held in the Spring of 1996 in Prague under the auspices of the President of the Republic and with the participation of the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports. In English, French and Czech was published the volume of basic documents for this project – the national report written by the Czech research team and the report prepared by the OECD examiners Reviews of National Policies for Education. Czech Republic (1996). The project coordinator in Czech Republic was the Educational Policy Centre of Charles University, its director being Mr. Ladislav Čerych. This project ranks, as concerns the Czech education policy, among the most important ones in terms of its scope and depth. Its recommendations are based on realistic possibilities and often on already initiated trends of development of Czech education and many of them are already being implemented.

A direct involvement in international projects in the field of vocational education is at present effected in collaboration with the OECD, within the project Transition from School to Work (this project focuses on issues which are, due to relatively low unemployment, quite neglected in the Czech Republic). Joint activities with EU countries relate especially to our collaboration with ETF in Torino, the initiatives in the Czech Republic of the starting of the programme Leonardo da Vinci and overall to the work of the National Training Fund in Prague, which concentrates on many of the activities mentioned above (it e. g. hosts the office of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, coordinates the Transition from School to Work project and the like).

Leonardo da Vinci – an EU action programme for the implementation of EU policy in vocational education was adopted by the Ministerial Council of the EU in December 1994 for five years (1995-1999). The Czech Republic acceded the programme based on an agreement among the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Economy in August 1995. Consequently the preparatory work on the financial and logistical background for the programme was started with a view to completing the preparatory activities by the end of 1996. A National Co-ordination Unit was set up on 1 March 1996 and has been very active ever since. In Central Europe the Czech NCU is seen as one of the most active ones. The necessary documents have been prepared, either in the form of translations of official documents and their customisation for the Czech Republic, or original Czech documents. In 1997 Czech institutions are still partners in the projects, but as of 1998 they will play the role of project organisers.

From among the activities implemented in the Czech Republic and supported by the EU through the Phare programme mention should be made, apart from the Phare VET programme taken up in the preceding chapter, also of the Development of Educational Policy project, prepared by Czech specialists (Rozvoj vzd_lávací politiky 1994). (Report dated 1994, the project co-ordinator was Mr. Jaroslav Kalous, Director of the Education Research and Development Institute.) This comprehensive appraisal study was prepared by Czech specialists within the Phare RES programme (Renewal of the Education System). The study focused on fundamental structural issues and included general parts as well as special parts, devoted to the respective sectors of education. Secondary vocational education was one of the key components of the study, synthesising the theoretical outcomes of many sectoral research studies.

The Phare RES programme also involved the preparation of an analytical evaluation study Curriculum Design and Teaching Resources (1994, the head of the team of authors was Mr. Bohumil Janyš, Director of the Vocational Education Research Institute). The team comprised of specialists in the field of general and vocational education. A specific mention may be made also of the Phare programme Education Standards for the Field of Social Work, which involves the preparation of curricular documents for the social work study programme (and the related social care programme).

In most cases the Phare programmes follow up on theoretical studies prepared by research institutes and universities. They reflect also the implemented as well as anticipated steps within the transforming education system and the outcomes of the respective evaluations. In the domain of vocational education, the perceivably most important outcomes are those of the Vocational Education Research Institute, which will be taken up below. Overall it is possible to say that these Phare programmes are very important and mutually complementary with the research undertaken in the education sector. The mutual institutional and personnel interface between both of these important sources enables the creation of a consistent system.

It has been already pointed out that Europe-wide activities are seen as an important contribution, complementary to the national research works. Along with this observation it may be stated that the Czech experts on vocational education have earned a high reputation within these European programmes. Similarly, many Czech institutions are increasingly involved in these programmes and their management structures. The director of the Vocational Education Research Institute, Mr. Bohumil Janyš and the director of the National Training Fund Mrs. Miroslava Kopicová are members of the advisory councils of ETF in Torino and Mr. Janyš moreover chairs its group for Standards in Vocational Education. The Czech Republic is also involved in the global programme UNEVOC (managed within the UNESCO framework). The Vocational Education Research Institute is the Czech national centre for UNEVOC and the deputy director of this Institute, Mr. František Barták, is a member of the UNEVOC advisory council.

In the Czech Republic is already being implemented an independent research work devoted to a comprehensive comparison of the status and trends of vocational education in our country and in developed countries (especially Olga Kofroňová - Ji_í Vojt_ch 1997, or for adult education Old_ich Pavlík, 1997). This activity needs to be seen as yet another logical step in the overall evolution of research of this topic - i. e. a step away from individual pieces of research of partial issues undertaken by national professionals, possibly in collaboration with foreign experts, or its comprehensive examination undertaken exclusively by foreign experts (though in consultation with Czech ones).

2.1 International Collaboration in Youth Employment

Mention has already been made of the project implemented in collaboration with the OECD - Transition from School to Work (the team leader of the project is Ms. V_ra Czesaná from the National Training Fund). Other projects and programmes, described in this project (the author of these parts is Mr. Miroslav P_ibyl from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), have, however, also been implemented in the employment field under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour. Apart from the OECD joint project, focused on the evaluation of labour market services in the Czech Republic, the outcomes of which were discussed in 1994 in a joint conference of the Ministry of Labour and OECD, important activities develop within the framework of the Phare programme, especially the PALMIF Fund. The Fund is focused on the testing of new employment policy tools and the implementation of national, regional and local projects to address unemployment. Youth unemployment was, inter alia, also taken up within these activities. A programme entitled MOST was devoted to unqualified youth. It involved the placement of youth to public works through the labour offices, their consequent enrolment in a motivational course and familiarisation with job contents in various professions. Then a choice followed and a practical retraining course and job entry. These activities were extended by a preventive measure - the introduction job selection course in the last years of basic school. Another 30 labour offices, which face the issue of the young generation at risk of long term unemployment, joined the programme. The rate of success of the programme is high - it succeeds in placing 80 percent of those who join it.

The above activities need to be seen as complementary to those, which focus, within the system of education, on providing the young generation with relevant qualification. It will be necessary in the future to interconnect even more closely the fields of competence of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, such that there is a strong linkage between education and the labour market, as will be taken up in greater detail below. Many activities in the field of labour and social affairs (retraining, qualification improvement) is already undertaken through the system of education.

2.2 Bilateral Collaboration Among Czech Schools

Apart from the multilateral Europe-wide projects mentioned in the first part of this chapter, there are in the Czech Republic numerous projects for the bilateral collaboration of schools. Their numbers is in the order of hundreds. Most frequently they have involved the direct collaboration between two schools, one of them in the Czech Republic and the other a foreign nation, mostly in an EU country (but also in some non-member countries, such as Switzerland and Norway). In view of the legal status of the schools, their headmasters may act as independent contractual partners. These projects are not subject to any approval and often are not even registered in the centre.

The activities involved are however highly beneficial and entail specific outcomes for the school (know how for new technologies, new syllabuses, modern equipment, textbooks, new techniques in teaching, development of student and teacher language skills, development of school management, strengthening of the European dimension in civic education), but also for the community and region. The needed funding is ensured by the schools themselves, in some cases even through sponsors, such as local or regional employers (individuals as well as professional associations). In most cases the schools are not supported by the state administration.

The situations is different in a case whereby the school enters into a direct relationship with a foreign partner, within a broader programme, based on a plan of bilateral collaboration at the ministerial level. There are many such programmes and they all cannot be even listed in this document. Annex 2 presents only the most important ones.

3. THE CZECH SYSTEM OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

AND TRAINING

Apart from the international collaboration already mentioned, the research and development of vocational education and training in the Czech Republic is undertaken especially through the programme of sectoral research of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. This is a grant system, whereby the funds are distributed based on a procedure of selection of projects submitted to the framework topics announced beforehand. Vocational education and training usually figures as one such framework topic. In 1997 it became, in accordance with the new EU and OECD policy, a part of the broader focus on lifelong learning. Sectoral research evolves gradually from a pattern whereby the initiatives to announce a specific topic were presented by the very researchers and their possibilities towards a broad discussion of these topics not only within the Ministry of Education, but also by the broader public and their gradual convergence with the Ministry's strategic needs. 1997 is the first time that the sectoral research funded in greater extent the projects of international collaboration in research and development (including the already mentioned project with OECD on Transition from School to Work, undertaken by the National Training Fund). The Programme of collaboration with OECD on research of the system of education and education, has been announced independently. Within the framework of this programme there will be funded also the projects on the views of employers on the education acquired by the graduates and their placement in the job market - see the individual networks of the OECD INES programme - Education Systems Indicators - into which the Czech republic has already been included. Both programmes will jointly receive some 20 Million CZK in 1997.

At the beginning of 1997 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports appointed the Sectoral Research Council, which for the first time includes staff of the Ministry as well as external personalities, which are recommended specialists from the field of education. The significance of the Council was underlined by the fact that its membership includes Mr. Libor Svoboda, deputy minister for finance and economy (chairman of the Council). The vice-chairmen of the Council are Mr. Jan Koucký, Adviser to the Minister, and Mr. Zden_k Helus, Dean of the Faculty of Education, Charles University. The Secretary of the Council is Ms. Jana Hendrichová, head of the team of the Phare VET programme evaluation component Research and Development/Internationalisation. The Council will play a major role in identifying the topics for sectoral research as well as in a thorough assessment of the projects submitted and will also collaborate with the project submitters in their preparation and implementation.

The Vocational Education Research Institute has been, ever since its first announcement in 1991 in an important way and sometimes even exclusively involved in the sectoral research of the Ministry focused on vocational education and training. The Institute was also in 1992 and 1996, when the Ministry of Economy took over the responsibility for the education of pupils in secondary vocational schools, involved in the grant research of this ministry. Until the end of 1996 the Institute handed over to its clients for their perusal 51 completed research projects duly defended (the number of projects does not correspond with the number of grants – in some cases several projects were included in one grant). The topics of the projects may be structured as follows:

1. Vocational education policy
2. International context of vocational education
3. Curriculum of vocational education
4. Professional and educational standards in vocational education
5. Certification of the results of vocational education, final examinations and maturita (school leaving) examinations
6. Further (vocational) education, retraining
7. Social partners of vocational education and the collaboration therewith in identifying qualification requirements
8. Labour market and vocational education
9. Professional orientation of primary school pupils
10. Master examination
11. Miscellaneous

Annex 3 hereto contains the characteristics of outputs according to the above structure. List of outputs forms an supplement to bibliography of this volume.

In the future further expansion may be anticipated of the basis of researchers of projects related to the development of vocational education and training, especially at the post-secondary level and in the field of further education, i. e. the newly developing areas of the Czech education system. Also the issues of the relationship with the labour market will probably be researched by other research institutes, as is the case already at present (see e. g. the activities of the Educational Information Institute and some higher learning institutions as well as independent agencies both within the OECD INES programme, and outside it).

3.1 Monitoring and Research of Qualifications in the Area of Labour and Social Affairs

As it has been already pointed out with reference to international research, the linkage between education and labour market needs is very important. Due to very low unemployment in the Czech Republic (around 3,5 percent during the two most recent years) this linkage in not that much perceived in the system of education, though even here some of the outputs of the Vocational Education Research Institute and other research institutes focus on it (see above). In support of this linkage there has been prepared an agreement on collaboration and information exchange between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. These activities have thus far been only partial – there is lacking a systematic mapping of the placement of graduates according to its correspondence with the level acquired and the field of education and the changes, if any, of such placement over time during the period after graduation and during several recent years. It is also unknown, what specifically is the intensity and nature of contacts between various levels and types of schools and the practice, how many specialists from businesses are active in schools and to what extent – though thorough research of this type is under preparation.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs generates much more important initiatives focused on the identification of qualifications needed in the labour market, specifically as concerns the education and qualification structure of the unemployed. The knowledge thus acquired consequently affects not only the system of retraining and qualification improvement, but at present already the entire system of education. The information flows through direct contacts with the requirements of the employers at schools, which usually organise the qualification improvement or retraining courses, as well as through the data provided on purpose to the Ministry of Education and through it specifically to the school administration. This and other information on the labour market will probably be used also within the now current Programme of School Network Optimisation, whereby a not negligible item in the evaluation of the neediness of schools and study programmes provided will be their linkage with the territorial need for qualifications.

Overall analyses and estimates of the evolution in the labour market in terms of need for qualifications and/or the level of education acquired are thus far only in their initial stage as concerns the provision to schools at various levels of signals concerning the optimisation of students enrolled in various fields. Only a little more advanced are the ideas on the prospects of labour market evolution in various regions. Neither in this case, however, is the information systematic – it rather depends on the initiatives and mutual communication between the various participants involved (schools, labour offices, district administration offices as well as school administration offices and employers). Thus far the enrolment and structure of school graduates in retraining courses have not been monitored separately – which, if this was the case, could provide important incentives for the educational policy. Only graduates at the so- called internship posts are monitored, i. e. posts towards employment at which the employer receives a financial contribution from the labour office during the first one or two years.

It is perhaps useful to present concise information on the system of labour market monitoring and on the placement of graduates:
The information on the supply and demand in the labour market may be obtained from the statistics of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs – Employment Services Administration. This information is available for the entire Czech Republic as well as for individual districts. Namely, the Monthly Statistics on Unemployment and Vacant Jobs (school graduates are monitored separately), the Monthly Statistics on Active Employment Policy, (which features posts for professional internships of graduates and the youth). Supplementary information may be obtained from the labour offices, primarily the quarterly statistics on unemployment and vacant jobs (containing even information of the age structure of the jobless) and the labour offices statistics on unemployed graduates (according to school levels, study fields and gender). Use may be made even of the regular semi-annual and annual reports – analysis of the labour offices and the assessment of implemented active employment policy projects. The numbers and placement of medical and health care graduates are evidenced in the Ministry of Health statistics. Based on this data and supplementary information, the Ministry of Labour and

Social Affairs has already prepared a forecast of qualifications needed in the health care sector, which in turn has been used in the development of the health care schools network and enrolment of students in the medical faculties.

Other sources of information for the educational system include the data of the Czech Statistical Office (statistical yearbook, population projections, time series of basic labour statistics and sample surveys of labour power).(For more detailed information on this issue please refer to V_ra Czesanná et al., 1996).

3.2 Support to the Development of Individual Schools

The life of individual schools is affected by many results of research and development projects, commissioned and prepared at the central level. These include especially the projects for the development of the contents and organisation of education, standards, certification, linkages with the labour market and linkages with other levels of the school system. The projects related to the educational policy will in the future undoubtedly also exert such impact. And yet it is impossible that research and development be initialised and undertaken exclusively at the level of the centre. The fact that the schools may in a way influence the composition and the contents of their programmes implies considerable innovation activities at the schools themselves, the necessity of their communication with the employers and other social partners, local governments and other participants (including other schools). Development activities at the schools are undoubtedly grossly supported by the mentioned programmes of international bilateral collaboration and are obviously influenced also by the currently developed system of further education of teachers as well as the managerial training of some managers (directors, teachers). Thus far, however, the system of support for innovation activities at schools has not been fully completed. In this respect mention should be made of the role of the Programme of Development of Primary and Secondary Education (later on EXTRA), which was implemented during past years.

The objective of the Programme of the Development of Primary and Secondary Education was to support projects contributing to the improvement of teaching and education in pre-school, primary and secondary (or higher secondary) and special education, using new organisational or methodological procedures or purposefully developing those in current use, or enabling the pupils more effective access to education or increasing the interest in teaching and scholarship. The issue thus was not only that of education programme development, but also technical equipment in individual institutions. Based on the results of a public tender, the programme was supposed to support the activities of schools, educational institutions and other related institutions in the Czech Republic.

The programme was first announced in 1993 as a long term programme of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. There was no constraint on the themes of projects, such that there would be a room for own initiatives of the schools and their needs and thematic groups were established only later. There was no constraint also on the amount of funds requested for one project (this was the difference as compared with the original EXTRA programme). The funds were always provided for one year and could be used also for investment, but only for the purchase of teaching aids and technology (e. g. audio and computers) for non-profit organisations within the sector of education, youth and sports. For instance in the first year of its operation (1993) altogether 346 projects were submitted, of which 136 were accepted. Funds amounting to 45 million CZK were distributed. The Czech School Inspectorate verified the correspondence between the real and declared application of the funds.

The original EXTRA programme was announced in 1992. The maximum amount of funds available for one projects was limited to CZK 200,000.-. In 1994 the programme was transferred to district school administrations and the Programme of the Development of Primary and Secondary Education was retained by the Ministry. The original purpose of EXTRA is thus still operational in the form of support to innovation activities of schools at the district level, provided that the district education authorities have sufficient means. A more detailed survey not being available, it is possible to assess neither the volume nor the focus of this support.

The programme of the development of primary secondary education development, later on entitled EXTRA, controlled by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, was suspended in about January 1996. The rationale was doubts, whether the programme was in conflict with the Act on public orders and controversial views of the role of the programme and the justification for funds allocation to individual entities. There were also reservations as to the mode and effectiveness of funds allocation as well as the extra workload which the programme implied for some elements of the Ministry. It is also possible that a greater need to assist the school like this was not felt. As concerns the entities external to the Ministry, e. g. the Czech School Inspectorate or the educational committee of the Parliament often raised questions as to the purpose of specific subsidies, found a lack of supervision and did not approve of the prevailing requests from schools for the supply of computer equipment.

In conclusion it is possible to say that some negative experiences with the EXTRA programme should not become the final veto over the existence of central programmes supporting development and innovation at individual schools. Same as in the sectoral research of the Ministry of Education it is possible to more thoroughly determine in the future the objectives of programmes and the procedures for their accomplishment and to control and supervise more in greater detail the operation and evaluate their results. Similar programmes will in the future surely undergo a greater expansion, also at the level of local administration or broader regions.

4. PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF

THE HITHERTO VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING STUDIES

In characterising the significance of the Strategic Study on Vocational Education and Training from 1993, which became the background for the Phare VET programme, we also shortly took up the evaluation of the pros and cons of the Czech system of vocational education contained in the study and the evolution of the system as compared with the recommendations of the study. In this chapter we summarise and comment upon the recommendations for Czech vocational education, contained in other important studies, which we also partly compare with the recommendations in the strategic study.

In the introduction to this summarisation we will devote our attention to the framework of further development of vocational education and training, the trends which gain ground in the developed countries, in both EU and OECD countries of which OECD extends beyond the context of Europe. In this respect we will mention two publications from 1996, which represent the programme documents of the said organisations.

The European Commission White Paper on Education and Vocational Training (White Paper EU, 1996)

The term "White Paper" signifies that the publication of the document was preceded by a political consensus and a broad collaboration involving the professional and non-professional public. The document derives the role of the human factor on an ever increasing need for high qualifications in an information society, which is increasingly influenced by the progress of science and technology and internationalisation of commerce. These factors eliminate the divisions between labour markets and modify the character of labour. The demands on education grow also in the area of ethics concerning especially biotechnology and information techniques.

The White Paper strives to reintroduce the values of a broad basis of general knowledge enabling the mobility of labour. The qualifications are to be built upon real skills – not only on formal grounds. Vocational education is to accommodate the principle of lifelong learning, based on a ban on exclusion from the education process or its limitation. The educational system is to provide second and subsequent chances and school and other education has to be harmonised with employers needs. One of the options is a personal qualification card, which would provide evidence of the skills and competencies of its holder.

Lifelong Learning for All (OECD 1996)

The document establishing the OECD mandate for the area of education Lifelong

Learning for All also stresses new conditions and new opportunities which open up in front of the education system in view of the universalisation of social and economic development. The document does not only refer to the European dimension, but also to a global dimension. One of the options for coping with the new situation is, according to this voluminous publication, to concentrate on diversity of education structures and on the satisfaction of individual demand for education opportunities.

Lifelong learning defines a broad array of objectives and strategies, which proceed from the thesis that an individual must have an opportunity for lifelong learning and that there has to be an equal access to education for all, irrespective of gender, age, employment status and the like (in contrast to the approaches thus far, whereby lifelong learning was a privilege for the elite). In this process the following three factors play a specific role. individual development, social consistency and economic growth, due to which the growth of education and qualifications of the population becomes indispensable.

The standard education concept contains elements of uniform education policy for the system of secondary education i. e. education which follows after the completion of compulsory schools attendance. Its basic feature is the possibility of education throughout life for an individual in a standard mode, i. e. alternately to other activities – work, leisure, retirement etc. In contrast to this, lifelong learning focuses less on the role of formal institutions and proceeds rather from informal study in a varying environment – at home, at work, in the community etc. – and from the combination of formal and informal learning. This approach also provides the needed feedback on usefulness and effectiveness to all forms of education.

Another difference rests in the involvement of governments in the system of education. A standard education strategy recognises the important role of the government the organisation, management and funding of education. In recent years we were able to witness a deviation from this trend and on the other hand more stress on shared responsibility and partnership. It is however necessary to resolve continuously the problems of throughput and internal consistency of educational systems, identification and renewal of sources ensuring their functioning and to educate the individual, already at the primary and secondary stages, to appreciate lifelong learning.

According to this publication the maxim of lifelong learning is "the support of in-service education and work during studies". There is a growing emphasis on the responsibility of employers, but also of other strategic partners as well as of the actual learners. Individual demand is to become a key factor in education.

Vocational Education and Training – Western Europe (Jean-Pierre Jallade 1992)

We supplement the information of the two above publications with a summary of modern trends in the field of vocational education, as presented in a study by a respected author. The author maintains that there emerges a trend to prolong basic general education up to 9 years or more. Only in some countries (the Netherlands, Germany) the pupils are allocated to three various types of schools already after four years of common studies. At the beginning of the nineties the European systems represented three basic models for the provision of professional skills.

The author further characterises first the school model, whereby vocational education takes the form of a day-long teaching, traditionally organised into years. The studies are concluded by the awarding of a technical diploma, which usually differs from the general education diploma. The curricula are determined centrally and the examinations are standardised. For instance in France and Italy a three-pillar structure prevails (the traditional general education pillar, technical pillar leading to the qualification of a technician, vocational pillar leading to the qualification of a worker). In some countries there are two or three pillars within one school, so that transition between them be facilitated and difference in status mitigated.

The second, apprentice model tries to combine learning in an enterprise with learning at vocational schools. The case in point is Germany and German speaking countries, in which this tradition is known as the dual system. The curricula are determined jointly by the representatives of employers, trade unions and education ministries, it is however the enterprises which bear the responsibility for their implementation. This traditional apprentice training in fact exists in most European countries, but concentrates on skilled craft jobs.

The vocational training at the school model rests in the provision of practical on-the-job training to young people who completed compulsory schooling. It is a part of the public policy response to youth unemployment. The employers are often subsidised by the government. These usually highly diverse programmes play a major role in vocational education in the United Kingdom.

The developments proved that it is impossible in any country to implement mechanically any of these systems. In most countries there are in place various combinations of the systems – depending on their traditions, experience and current needs. Their common feature is that the syllabuses are, apart from the technical and professional component of the training, increasingly penetrated also by the so called general skills, including ethics, behaviour, communication. All European countries adjust their programmes to technological, social and economic changes.

The publications cited point at the most recent directions in the development of vocational education and training as well as educational systems in general, which trends were also significantly reflected in the recommendations submitted by foreign experts to the Czech education system and consequently also in the studies prepared by Czech authors.

Strategic Study of Vocational Education and Training (Birks Sinclair and Associates Ltd. 1993)

This strategic study which focuses on the Czech and Slovak situation also envisages that the workers will not have one lifelong job and will be compelled to change or improve their qualification. The demand for labour will, according to the study, grow primarily in the tertiary services sector (tourism, health care, telecommunications, language services, information technologies, etc.). The demand will fall for traditional manual jobs with lower level of skills in which probably unemployment will grow. On the contrary, a flexible labour power, which is creative, adjustable and independent should not face even in the future the problems with placement in the labour market. The response from the vocational education and training systems should facilitate these changes or mitigate their negative impacts in the case of unwelcome changes. This all will happen within the context of global changes and practice in other countries.

The study also mentions the possibilities of application of experiences from other European countries in the Czech (and Slovak) Republic. For the Czech reform experiences of other European continental countries are of specific importance. On the other hand the Anglo-Saxon or US model, whereby the preparation for employment takes place entirely after the completion of school education, will most probably not be applied. Also the applicability of the German dual model is questionable, since it necessitates high financial support by the enterprise.

We will not cite here the rich recommendations of this study, which are analysed in the works of other teams which assess individual aspects of the Phare VET programme. Let us only mention that this study is in accord with the two other cited publications in that it supports the development of an integrated school, the deepening of general knowledge, postponement of specialisation and the need for a radical solution of the pattern of financing of the vocational education and training system, which is also fully in keeping with the tendencies in developed countries, reflected in the policy documents of international organisations. The issues of lifelong learning have thus far not received appropriate attention in the said studies, in view of the necessity to address topical priorities of the initial education system and the low unemployment, which does not emphasise their importance. The study also addresses, based on the experience of developed countries, the possibility for setting up nation-wide institutions – the Council for Certification in Education and the State Council for Vocational Qualifications (also these recommendations are almost identical with the subsequent OECD recommendations). It also suggests that a unit be established within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, for strategic monitoring of the transformation process, co-ordination of activities related thereto and assessment of their implementation. An independent professional centres should work on curriculum development.

Reports on National Education Policy: Czech Republic (OECD 1996)

This publication, containing a report on the educational system and policy in the Czech Republic prepared by Czech experts, as well as recommendations of the examiners, is conceptualised more broadly than the strategic study, since it deals with the entire field of education and not only with vocational education. Its exceptional analytical values stem from a combination of an expert perspective at both, national and international levels.

The first part of the publication contains an abbreviated version of the background report submitted by the Czech Republic. From the perspective of vocational education the original version is quite interesting, since it contains a detailed description of the system. It should, however, be noted that the report was prepared during 1995 and it thus does not reflect some changes which occurred later. The background report characterises important developments in the Czech Republic after 1989:

1. the rapid development of secondary vocational schools, even outside the state sector
2. the radical reduction of the involvement of enterprises in apprentice training
3. the emergence of new institutional forms – secondary integrated schools and higher vocational schools
4. the distribution of power in this area among the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and other ministries (note: now in January 1997 again all under the Ministry of Education)

In doing that it discusses the consequences of these phenomena:

q it raises the question whether through regulation the share of students at gymnasia is to be increased, or whether general education at technical schools is to be strengthened

q as concerns the curriculum, it emphasises that it is necessary to distinguish what is to be determined by the state and how

q it argues that it is desirable to develop forecasts of future qualification needs – it is however necessary to stipulate what is to be done in this respect by the central bodies

The second part is specifically important in relation to research and development, since it contains the report of the OECD examiners and their responses to questions raised by the Czech team. It is observed also in this report that the transformation entails changes which are accentuated due to increased competition in global markets and technological progress, which makes the traditional forms of manufacturing and services obsolete. The examiners consider the following the most important reform measures:

1. Free choice of the educational path, which entails a reduction in the number of students at secondary apprentice schools leading to an apprenticeship certificate. There are now more attractive fields leading to a maturita examination and the applicant demand focuses primarily on tertiary sector jobs, which fully reflects trends in other OECD countries.
2. Elimination of state monopoly in education. Private schools have filled the gap which emerged due to the rigidity of state schools response to labour market requirements. There are however several partial problems related to their operation. Private schools strive to enrol the highest possible number of students (financial contribution) and thus reduce the level of requirements to be met by first year students. The issue is one of absence of educational standards and limited possibility of control over the quality of operation and outputs of individual schools. There is a growing gap in the supply of fields which are less popular, but still need qualified labour. Most importantly, however, there is a lack of capacity to monitor the experience of private schools and top make use of it in modernising state schools. There is also no systematic development of collaboration among schools.
3. Changes in the Position, Role and Status of Secondary Apprentice Schools – the gradual integration of both mainstreams in vocational education creates more room for student choice of profession.

4. Establishment of Post-secondary Vocational Schools – increasing the vertical throughput of the educational system.
5. Overall liberalisation of the system, whereby it is primarily the schools and their teachers who bear responsibility for changes, while the state provides policy and financial support.

In view of the OECD examiners the changes did have a positive impact, in that the vocational education system is now able to respond quite quickly to the newly emerging needs in the labour market as well as to the young people's aspirations. They further maintain that too much stress on market approaches from the bottom to the top and limited attention to the shaping of nation-wide policy and overall regulation entail many negative consequences: the schools compete amongst themselves instead of collaborating, the supply of education is increasingly less transparent and the status of various types of schools is unclear. In some fields there is an excess supply of education, whereas in others there is a shortage, etc. The schools are unable to address these problems only through the market principle – without external incentives. (Note: the report was prepared prior to the start of the School Network Optimisation Programme.)

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports should, along with its partners, undertake the leadership in rationalising and regulating the present system of vocational education and in shaping its development policy. Collaboration among schools should be fostered on the grounds that they either prepare their students for identical jobs or operate in the same region. Curriculum change or modernisation of the syllabus of vocational education is, same as in the strategic study, seen as an important stage in the renewal of our education system. The examiners observed that at present in the Czech Republic emphasis is placed on the modernisation of syllabuses at individual schools. The development of methods and institutions involved in the changes of study programmes, a continuous process aiming at an improvement of the vocational education system as a whole, is inadequate and the same goes for the participation of social partners.

For illustration we present here the OECD examiners recommendations related to vocational education and training: As concerns the issues of occupational training and other related issues, the most important recommendations focus on the establishment of a national curriculum council as an advisory body to the ministry, which would represent a broad platform for all parties within and outside the system (recommendation 5), the establishment of a national agency for curriculum, standards and certification of vocational education, preparation of a catalogue of qualifications (recommendation 6) and the creation of tax incentives for businesses to invest in vocational education (recommendation 7) (in one way or another, these recommendations are also embodied in the Strategic Study). A very important recommendation, conditional however to the future territorial structure of the Czech Republic, concerns the establishment of a medium layer of school administration (at the regional level), which would enjoy broad powers as concerns the identification of the needs of the region in terms of the education system and collaboration with all important partners (labour offices, businesses, professional chambers and the like) and would also significantly interfere in the structure of this system and the contents of provision. These issues complement recommendation 11, which envisages mandatory school boards, involving apart from the representatives of pupils and parents also those of local communities - including the employers (at present these boards may be established voluntarily).

Development of Education Policy. Analytical Evaluation Study (Phare RES 1994)

This study is one of those prepared exclusively by Czech authors. It covers the entire education system. As concerns vocational education, it focuses on the following:

a) It is necessary to implement the principle of participation of social partners in the preparation of education programmes at the school level and in school management. The basic principles include openness and transparency, the possibility of control and participation of the public. External management interventions are to be focused only on the outcomes of school operation. A certain lack of experience on the part of the authors is evidenced by their strict refusal of the regulation of the number of graduates, which in their opinion is "out of question in an economy of a liberal society" and their absolute stress lay on market principles.

b) The authors maintain the same opinion on changes in the curriculum as that expressed by the authors of the Strategic Study of Vocational Education and Training.

c) The educational policy development study stresses the need for the evaluation of vocational education. The evaluation should proceed from professional standards in the creation of which employer representatives should be substantially involved and their marked involvement should also be reflected in apprentice examinations. The role of the school Inspectorate is different, as it supervises the observance of obligatory standards and regulations and provides methodological assistance to schools. With a reference to a view of foreign experts it is stated that in the Czech Republic insufficient attention is paid to the issues of the evaluation of vocational education and that the methods of evaluation, enabling comparisons with foreign countries, are not developed.

d) The proposal for future financing of vocational and apprentice education maintains that it is necessary to limit the institute of state apprentices only to social purposes or support of development of specific fields. It is proposed to meet the costs of theoretical teaching normatively from the state budget. The costs of practical training are to be met primarily by entrepreneurs or future employers. These should enjoy economic incentives through taxation. Another option would be to subsidise practical training from the state budget, such that the extent of subsidy would derive from the demand for apprentices in specific fields. The subsidy would discern entrepreneurs engaged in apprentice training and offer them economic benefits. As a secondary source of financing the costs of practical training may involve the funds of chambers of business associations.

e) The empirical analysis of the study contains also an analysis of the structure of unemployment by qualification. Same as today the most important share was that of secondary apprentice school graduates, the overall share of which in the structure of graduates has been already falling in favour of secondary technical schools and integrated schools. At the same time the capacity of gymnasia remains stable. Only in recent years the consequences of transformation processes in secondary education start to demonstrate themselves (the establishment of private schools, disappearing differences between secondary apprentice schools and secondary vocational schools).

These certain tangible findings and the relatively detailed characteristics of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the most important studies evidence apart from the agreement of the views of the authors also a certain evolution of their basic perspective, influenced by their improving knowledge of the real state of vocational education and training as well as of the whole of education and its environment, and also by the current political situation.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP

This chapter contains the identification of major problems in the area of development and research and internationalisation of vocational education and training, which the working group encountered during its work on this topic and the formulation of which has gradually been refined. These problems and suggestions as to their solution are partly based also on the contents and findings of the preceding chapters of the study. They do not specifically refer to the experience of pilot schools, however, this experience was one of the most important prerequisites for their formulation.

q Co-ordination of research and development/internationalisation

Problem
The activities in the area concerned were, as of 1990, undertaken rather ad hoc, depending on the needs of individual economic sectors, research institutions and professionals, as well as individual schools and were related to the international programmes and projects available at the time. The activities have as yet been to full extent neither surveyed and analysed, nor mutually interrelated. Though recently they are being systematically interrelated, a lot still needs to be done in this respect.

Interpretation
Consequently, the field of vocational education and training has not been investigated as a whole and within its full context, though there are already many studies available, covering its various aspects. The knowledge and recommendations so far is either only fragmentary, or covers the most obvious problems – without a detailed elaboration. It is often included in studies which, though important, deal with other or more general issues.

Recommendation
To define, for the Ministry and other concerned bodies, a strategy and priorities for the

research and development and internationalisation of vocational education and training, based on a thorough investigation of the status of the given area, facilitated also by the Phare VET programme evaluation component concerning Research and Development/ Internationalisation.

q Extension of the scope of research and development by activities transferred, due to modification of authorities, to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and its subordinated institutions from the Ministry of the Economy and other ministries and by activities, which relate to the concept of life-long learning and the linkage of education to the labour market

Problem

Those parts of research and development of vocational education, which until 1996 were within the authority of other ministries, are not covered. Research has thus far also partly neglected the issues of further (adult) education, the role played by vocational education and training within the concept of life-long learning and the relationship of schools with the labour market.

Interpretation

There is a realistic threat that research activities will continue to focus on established areas and topics. Consequently, in the areas of transfer of authority to the Ministry of Education, development of life-long learning concept as well as linkages between the schools and the labour market, there will be a lack of data and analyses, needed to understand the context of these developments and for strategic decisions.

Recommendation

To include the above topics among research and development priorities and to study the experiences of developed countries in this respect.

q Coverage of the needs for research and development of new elements in the educational system (post-secondary vocational schools, lycea, integrated schools, technical training centres), hindsight analysis of vocational education schools network optimisation

Problem

To meet the new requirements of the Czech society, new types and levels of schools and other educational opportunities have emerged, which also mostly acquired their legal status. The emergence of these new elements in the educational system was a response to the needs and demands of the moment, but was not based on a thought through policy. Nor was it analysed in hindsight. The current schools network optimisation will entail major interventions in the vocational education system structure, which will be incapable of further effective development unless these interventions are assessed and conclusions drawn.

Interpretation

At present we feel the necessity to base the future development of the educational system on well considered strategic steps. As it already sometimes appears, a course of action not based on an overall strategy of development of the vocational education and training sector, supported by a detailed knowledge of its status and functioning, is bound not to be effective anymore.

Recommendation

Another priority for future research should be the investigation of the overall functioning of the schools network in terms of its efficiency as well as the real status of the new levels and types of education, their relationship with other traditional institutions and their contribution and development potential. Also in this respect, the situation in the Czech Republic should be compared with that in other countries.

- q **Development of support to research, development and innovative behaviour at the level of individual schools**

Problem

Though many schools demonstrate considerable initiatives aimed at a renewal of the contents and organisation of their study programmes and other innovations of teaching and develop to this end relationships with foreign institutions either within international programmes or bilaterally, there is currently lacking a sufficient and broad support of these activities. Also absent are mechanisms to foster the sharing of innovative experience among schools as well as the material support to innovations.

Interpretation

This situation may eventually entail a limitation or insufficiency of developmental and innovative activities of schools.

Recommendation

To assess and possibly implement the possibilities for the strengthening of programmes focused on the support of research and development and innovations at schools, either in the form of incentive financing or establishment of the needed support infrastructure (consultancy services, teacher and manager training in the area concerned, organising exchange of experience among schools, and the like).

- q **Human resources, financial and institutional inputs for the research and development of the entire area of vocational education and training**

Problem

The specialised Research Institute of Vocational Education is responsible for the major part of research and development of vocational education and training. Some activities, though, are undertaken elsewhere in the educational sector and in other sectors (e. g. in collaboration between the educational sector and the social welfare sector, knowledge is developed of demand in the labour market for professional qualifications; other ministries, in charge of the respective curriculum of vocational education and training, have their own knowledge; the National Training Fund acts in collaboration with the sectors of education and social welfare; and the like). A uniform research and development strategy is, however, lacking and the same goes for optimum environment for the implementation thereof.

Interpretation

Already at present there are cases of duplication of some activities, by various institutions and projects, with only minor modifications, which activities are undertaken for affiliated clients, often by the same experts and their financing is not transparent. No distinction is made between original and derived results of research and development. This leads to losses of time and effort, as well as incentives for many researchers and research institutions.

Recommendation

To survey the entire area of research and development, its organization, human resources, inputs and methods and volumes of financing and to establish strategic decision making in this area.

q Interactions Between Research and Decision Making

Problem

Irrespective of whether research and development thus far has been undertaken pursuant to the intentions of the decision makers, based on topics announced by them and in collaboration with them, or whether the initiatives implemented were generated independently by individual research teams or experts, the fact remains, that thus far there has been missing an effective channel of communication between researchers and decision makers, such that both would cross-fertilise and benefit from the knowledge of each other. A first step in this direction rests in the initiatives of the newly established Sectoral Research Council of the Ministry of Education and, in the area of vocational education, also many new sectoral research projects, activities related to the Phare VET programme and also some new research projects organised in collaboration with international organisations (e. g. the OECD – Transition from School to Work).

Interpretation

Though in the past the mentioned approach could be viable (in some cases, e. g. innovation tasks may have been resolved independently, based on the self-initiative of researchers or research institutions, or based on foreign initiative, thereby preventing inconsiderate interventions by decision makers) the in many respects limited interactions between researchers and decision makers are not anymore tolerable and the same goes for the ensuing deepening of their mutual misunderstanding, which serves the interests of no-one.

Recommendation

To ensure, in the course of work on a policy of further research and development of vocational education and training, an effective collaboration between the decision makers and researchers, their mutual communication and interaction. This may be accomplished e. g. through the Sectoral Research Council, within which a commission may be established to handle the issues of vocational education and training as well as sub-commissions for specialised themes in this area.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. List of Pilot Schools and Their Partners

Abbreviations: SOŠ – Secondary technical school
SOU – Secondary apprentice school
ISŠ – Integrated secondary school
COP – Centre of Vocational Training

SOU Kladno	– Aalborg Technical College, Denmark
ISŠ-COP Mladá Boleslav	– Aalborg Technical College, Denmark
ISŠ-COP Sezimovo Ústí	– Aarhus Business College, Denmark
ISŠ Ústí nad Labem	– Koge Business College, Denmark
ISŠ-COP Zlín	– Metalindrustriens Fagskole Technical College Ballerup, Denmark
ISŠ T_ebí_	– Naestved Business College, Denmark
SOU Glavunion Teplice	– Naestved Tekniske Skole, Denmark
SOŠ Ostrava-Poruba	– Teknisk Skole Hjoring, Denmark
SZeŠ Tábor	– Kongensgaard Landbrugsskole, Denmark
	– Hohere Landwirtschaftliche Bundeslehranstalt St. Florian, Austria
ISŠ-COP Frenštát pod Radhošt_m	– Lycee Professionnel E. Grand Amiens, France
ISŠ Pardubice-Polabiny	– Central Technical Institute Waterford, Ireland
ISŠ-COP Valašské Mezi_íčí	– Deutsche TELEKOM AG Munster, Germany
ISŠ Liberec	– Uberbetriebliche Ausbildungs Zentrum Frankfurt, Germany
SPŠ Ústí nad Orlicí	– Staatliche Berufsfachschule Schweinfurt, Germany
	– Instituto Tecnico Statale Commercia Villa Raveno di Besana, Italy
ISŠ-COP Brno, Oloumoucká	– Twents MBO College Enschede, The Netherlands
SOU a hotelová škola Hronov	– Halton College Cheshire Great Britain
SPŠ Brno, Sokolská	– Somerset College of Art and Technology, Great Britain

Annex 2. Major Programmes of Bilateral School Collaboration

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY - CZECH REPUBLIC

The collaboration between the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (BMBW) of FRG and the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports is extensive. The German co-ordinator of tasks resulting from the bilateral agreement is the Institute for Vocational Education (BIBB) and the Czech co-ordinator is the Vocational Education Research Institute. This collaboration involves e. g. the establishing of model Vocational Training Centres:

Plze_: fictitious firms centre for economic education
Most-Velebudice: centre for the preparation of new building technologies (dry masonry)
Kyjov: vocational training centre for car repairs and maintenance

Within the collaboration with BIBB are implemented also programmes focused on the introduction of new forms and contents of training for commercial jobs in commercial academies, apprentice training as well as in the training for German firms operating on the Czech territory. (The graduates from the Czech secondary schools or from the post-secondary vocational school will also pass examinations according to German regulations and receive a German certificate.) Based on an agreement with BIBB there is implemented a programme of individual study stays for professional staff of the Vocational Training Research Institute.

Based on bilateral agreements Czech teachers and masters (some 250 participants) undergo study stays in the Handwerkskammer Bayreuth.

BELGIUM - CZECH REPUBLIC

Experimental bilateral collaboration between Czech and Flemish secondary schools in the area of vocational education has been in operation since 1991.

Secondary Horticultural School in M_lník:

Ensures the activities of an information centre for Czech horticultural schools (new technologies, new information, new approaches). Other horticultural schools also closely collaborate with this one.

Secondary Industrial Construction School in Prague:

Collaboration in the area of educational counselling, language teaching and the work of school middle managers. The school receives methodological assistance from a foreign partner in the implementation of works using the Internet.

Secondary Apprentice School - AMOS Kada_:
Collaboration in the teaching of several fields (new technologies, materials, methodological approaches).

Integrated Secondary School in Mezibo_í:
Collaboration in the area of state-of-the-art process management technologies (PLC

systems).

All school shown above also collaborate in related fields with other foreign schools (FRG, the Netherlands).

NETHERLANDS - CZECH REPUBLIC

With support from the Ministry of Education and, in the past, also of the Ministry of Economy there have been implemented primarily projects in the area of training in electrotechnical fields. The professional partner in the Netherlands is the VEV Nijkerk (a specialised institution which guarantees and implements training in electrotechnical fields in the Netherlands) and the Czech partner is the Centre for Vocational Training in Krom__í_. Apart from this pilot school, there are over 20 satellite schools involved in the project. The schools have established innovation and testing centres, the project has specific objectives in the area of education as well as outputs for the industry.

DENMARK - CZECH REPUBLIC

Schools from both countries collaborate within a project of environmental education. The project is funded by the Danish Ministry of Education and its centre is the technical College in Slagelse. The Czech partners include the Secondary Industrial Machinery School in Karviná, Secondary Professional Environmental Protection School in Veselí nad Lu_nicí and the Secondary School Schola Humanitas in Litvínov. The objective is a comprehensive teaching of environmental protection.

As it has been already suggested in the text of the study, it is impossible to present a complete (and not even a representative) list of all foreign activities. The cases shown outline various levels of collaboration, breadth of programmes (from system-wide ones to single-field ones), etc. Many other cases could be added on the above list.

Annex 3. Grant Tasks Resolved in the Research Institute of Vocational Education, the Results and Their Application

Note: A list of 51 major research works prepared by the Vocational Education Research Institute forms an supplement to bibliography.

1. THE POLICY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The tasks related to the vocational education policy were resolved primarily during 1991. They proceeded from earlier works, the objective of which was to identify the consequences of the current societal and economic changes for vocational education. In the course of work on these tasks there were formulated general principles, which the policy of vocational education should respect, should this type of education remain stable and fulfil its role. The strategy of the development of vocational education was also formulated, which would ensure its desirable dynamism, based on the self-regulation of the system within the framework of an "established system of partnership" of all concerned entities. The issue was to identify optimum means for the management of development of vocational education, under a situation whereby the directive methods of central management have been refused. Ideas have been formulated on the basic shape of the system of vocational education, based on two principles: the system of vocational education will be pluralistic, i. e. it will enable the co-existence and competition of various types of vocational education. It will be open, so that it could readily respond to new demands. The concerned entities will participate in it.

During 1991 the grant task principal raised a request to prepare the starting points for the preparation of the project for transformation of the system of education. Consequently, the work concentrated on the clarification of the role of social partners in vocational education, the elaboration of the so called external structures of vocational education (i. e. the system of types and levels of this education) and the preparation of an internal curricular reform of vocational education.

In relation to the clarification of the role of social partners in vocational education there were primarily described the participants, which could enter into contacts with vocational education, and their roles were stipulated. Further, problems were identified which needed solution in order to ensure effective collaboration of the participants concerned with vocational education, namely for the identification of needs which such education is to meet and also for ensuring the preconditions for this education (including the necessary legislation, research and consultation activities, financing and management) and for the very implementation of vocational education. During the work in the grant task it was impossible to implement the proposals for collaboration due to a total lack of readiness on the part of employer and employee institutions and organisations to enter into the issues of vocational education. The works carried out in this part of the grant task however became the starting point for further clarification of collaboration with the social partners and for the implementation of contacts with them in future years (see the group of outputs no. 7).
The analysis of the character of vocational education leading to a qualification for the performance of specific jobs resulted in the categorisation of vocational education according to its level and type. Four levels of vocational education were identified and three types (pre-professional education, general vocational education, professional education). The identification of the levels of vocational education was supposed to eliminate the hitherto valid bond between a specific education and a specific type of educational institution. This was supposed to enable individual schools to provide education of various levels and types to their students. The idea of categorisation of vocational education was implemented by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in the preparation of an amended Act on Education and in the implementation of post-secondary vocational schools.

The objective of work on the model curriculum for vocational education was to prepare such a curriculum, which would accommodate the need to delegate major responsibility for the creation of educational programme to individual schools and also to ensure, through uniform and mandatory parts of the curriculum the desirable equal level of education acquired at various schools. The proposals for the new structure of the curriculum are being tested within the Phare project of pilot schools. (See the thematic group no. 3 for detail on the grant tasks concerning the curriculum.)

2. INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The grant tasks monitoring the international context of vocational education were focused on the accumulation of knowledge on the organisation of vocational education in selected European countries, the projects in European countries attempting the assurance or at least evaluation of the equality of vocational education, the links between vocational education and the labour market and the international documents addressing the issues of vocational education. The grant tasks in this thematic group were not intended to propose certain measures. They accumulated, analysed and presented information, which could serve as a guideline for the staff of various ministries and the Research Institute of Vocational Education in addressing the topical issues of vocational education in the Czech Republic. The outputs from these tasks played an important role in eliminating some misleading notions on the status of vocational education abroad. They pointed at the dependence of the manner of education on broad societal context and lead to a critical assessment of the possibility for adopting some elements of the vocational education system from abroad.

3. THE CURRICULUM OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The work on this topic was undertaken in two areas. The conception of a two-level curriculum was elaborated and the proposal for modules curriculum of vocational education was prepared.

The idea of a two-level curriculum envisages that the curriculum of vocational education will consist of two different parts. The so-called core curriculum will stipulate the requirements for a specific level of education in the form of targets and contents of general education, professional education divided into 20 sections and the so-called key competencies. The so-called school curriculum will include the requirement on specific profiling of the field of study, which responds to the needs of the regional labour market, the specific of the individual school, etc. The core curriculum will be uniform and mandatory in the entire country, the school curriculum will be prepared in individual schools. It is expected that thus the equality of education provided by individual schools could be ensured and also the room could open up for flexible adjustment of education to the objectives of various schools in different regions. This method of curriculum preparation was used within the Phare pilot school project, which tests its effectiveness. In 1996 the proposed outline of the core curriculum was evaluated by comparing it with the curriculum of selected apprentice studies. The experts found the core curriculum a useful starting point for the preparation of new educational programmes. The curriculum policy implemented in vocational education since 1989 was evaluated in the same year. The textbooks for various fields of training were analysed in terms of their overall structure, didactics and the needs of the labour market. Based in this analysis the trends in curricular policy were identified and compared with the declared intentions.

4. PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The solution of this group of grant tasks of the Ministry of education, Youth and Sports and of the tasks of the Ministry of Economy was started by elaborating the definition of standards in vocational education, the clarification of their role and a proposal for their categorisation. The categorisation of standards in vocational education involves the expression in the form of standards of requirements of job performance on education and also the presentation in this form of the goals of vocational education and the requirements on demonstration of competence acquired through vocational education. Accordingly, distinction is made between professional and educational standards. The formulation of professional standards falls within the authority of the representatives of employers and employees, the formulation of educational standards falls within the authority of the representatives of educational institutions. The professional standards represent the major starting point for the creation of educational standards.

With respect to the fact that employee and employer organisations are not yet ready to involve themselves in the process of the formulation of professional standards, the professional standards for all fields of apprenticeship training were prepared in the collaboration of the so-called professional groups, established by the Ministry. The work on the formulation of professional standards was started by the creation of a comparative survey, identifying the common and different points between 209 selected jobs, prepared by the EU bodies and the characteristics of the relevant Czech fields of training. The differences, if any, were justified in the attached commentaries. In the following stage, for each apprentice and study field (secondary apprentice school) a list of labour activities was created, which make up the contents of jobs for which the apprentices and students are being prepared. For the case of apprentice fields of training, these lists of labour activities were specified down to the level of specific labour operations and criteria were attached to each of these operations, according to which it is possible to judge, whether or not the operation was carried out correctly. All materials prepared were extensively commented upon and evaluated and were amended accordingly. Thus were established the so-called professional standards for apprenticeship training, which the Ministry of Economy intended to announce as a document endorsed by it. This, however, did not materialise, since the Ministry was disbanded. The professional standards are however put to use in the creation and assessment of programmes for vocational education.

5. CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, FINAL EXAMINATIONS AND MATURITA (SCHOOL LEAVING) EXAMINATIONS

The works on the manner of completion of vocational education may be divided in three groups. These include the works on the issues of certification in general, the works on the Maturita examinations in vocational education and the works on completion of education in apprenticeship training. The issue of certification of the qualification acquired was monitored in international context. First were analysed the differences in the functions of the certificates, the certification procedures and in the degree of responsibility of various institutions for quality certification in Germany, France and Great Britain. Simultaneously, information was accumulated and processed on the certification of qualifications in Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal. Based on this work were characterised the factors influencing the manner of completion of training in vocational education. As a counterpart to the information on the situation in the area concerned abroad was analysed the manner of completion of schooling in the Czech secondary education and new options were proposed for the certification of the education acquired.

Along with the works on the certification of acquired education were elaborated the proposals for a new philosophy of the Maturita examinations in vocational education. These proposals prefer a supra-subject form of Maturita examinations and emphasise the need to focus these examinations also on such attributes of the education acquired, which represent the level of education, relatively independently of its contents. The proposals elaborated were repeatedly discussed in public seminars and in their modified form became one of the options for a new form of the Maturita examinations, which was prepared in 1996 by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

For the Ministry of Economy an analysis of the present form of final examinations for apprenticeship training was prepared and possible changes were proposed, which would be in accordance with the present situation of preparation in the apprenticeship fields of training.

6. FURTHER (VOCATIONAL) EDUCATION, REQUALIFICATION

This grant task was being resolved in the course of 1996 and the issue was one of the first intentional enquiry into the issues of requalifications due to the changes in the labour market. Analysis was undertaken of the status and problems of the present requalification training, based on the outcome of empirical research and evaluation of the documentation of the accreditation commission. Procedures were proposed for the assessment of quality of submitted programmes of requalification education and simultaneously were prepared models of programmes for such professions, which are most demanded in the labour market.

7. SOCIAL PARTNERS OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND THEIR COLLABORATION IN IDENTIFYING QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

A targeted grant task concerning in a way the sense of the role of partners in managing vocational education was the task which, based on an empirical investigation, evaluated the role of these partners in the activities of school councils and provided recommendations as to the suitable forms of such collaboration.

In relation to the establishment of professional standards there was, in 1996, carried out research of the possibilities and forms of collaboration with employer organisations, with trade licensing offices and labour offices in ensuring the anticipated changes in professions, to which the vocational education should respond well ahead of time. The research established an increased willingness and readiness of employer organisations to take up the issues of the contents of vocational education. Therefore it was proposed to elaborate the principles for institutionalised collaboration of the Research Institute of Vocational Education with employer organisations, such that this collaboration be started immediately. The research carried out identified also specific idea on the part of employer organisations as to what changes in the organisation of work and contents of work within their authority they expect. This information was submitted to the personnel responsible for the formulation of programmes of vocational education.

8. LABOUR MARKET AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The work dealing with the monitoring of the relationships between vocational education and the labour market (namely those reflecting the position of graduates in the labour market) were orientated in two directions. The issue was on the one hand the monitoring of the situation in the labour market, which reflected the inconsistencies between the needs of the labour market and the outputs of vocational education and which attempted to identify the reasons for these inconsistencies, and on the other hand the analysis of labour market the results of which were used as means for evaluation of vocational education. The first direction of research focused on the degree of fit between the interest of pupils in individual fields of vocational education and the possibilities for their success in the labour market and the rate of unemployment of graduates from individual groups of fields of vocational education. The issue in the second direction of research was the evaluation of the labour market evolution within the framework of an overall macroeconomic and demographic projection. The needs of the labour market were compared with the structure of vocational education and thus were produced evaluative judgements as to vocational education.

9. PROFESSIONAL ORIENTATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS

This is the only grant task of its kind, which was resolved in 1993. The issue was the analysis of Czech and foreign materials on professional orientation of primary school pupils. Based on the study of these materials there was proposed a policy for the preparation of pupils for the choice of profession. A part of the proposal was an incorporation of this preparation into the curriculum of primary schools. This policy was tested in selected primary schools.

10. MASTER EXAMINATION

In 1993 in view of the expansion of small businesses there became topical the need to stipulate the qualification requirements for the management of independent small businesses and for the preparation of apprentices, if any, within the framework of these entrepreneurial activities. The reinstatement of the institution of the master examination was considered. The grant task characterised the possible roles of the master examination, its contents and organisational essentials. Special attention was paid to the issues of pedagogical competence of masters, as which the master examination, once passed, could testify.

11. MISCELLANEOUS

These tasks, commissioned in ad hoc 1991 based on actual need of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, concerned the manner of management of vocational education, implementation of information flows among the ministry, schools, pupils and parents, the legislative background for the organisation of pedagogical experiments and environmental education in vocational education. The results obtained bear the imprint of the time of their origination and their specific purpose and have limited permanent validity.

FOREIGN
EXPERTS
CONTRIBUTIONS

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

David PARKES

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The philosophy of the paper is illustrated by the first short section, what do we mean by the curriculum?

The answer is "the totality of all experiences, both planned and unplanned, which a student undergoes".

That answer determines the architecture of the paper, which is written in sections to illustrate the following major facets:

☐ what factors determine the curriculum?
☐ what are the organising principles of the curriculum?
☐ what are the major criteria for the content?

As can be seen from the title page – the sections necessarily overlap with the list of topics drawn up for the seminar: management, finance, quality etc. This is intentional given a holistic view of the topic.

The content and conclusions of the paper are drawn from the author's current transnational project portfolio.

The curricular criteria given in the last section are drawn from a British context but discussed and agreed by an international team responsible for curricular sectors in five countries, namely: France, Germany, Norway, Poland and the UK.

Similarly, the section on "building blocks for a successful VET system" has been written by a team working on the reconstruction of a VET system in Central Europe. The team consists of English, Dutch, German, Norwegian and Portuguese curriculum specialists.

Each section in the paper combines a comparative study aspect with transnational project management experience in the field.

The text is split into two parts:

☐ the policy factors shaping the curriculum
☐ the criteria determining the curriculum

Each part presents a facet or aspect of the curriculum process.

1. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CURRICULUM?

☐ that which is taught
☐ the syllabus
☐ the course content
☐ that which is learned
☐ the interaction between the student and tutor
☐ the delivery of knowledge, skills and concepts
☐ the methodology employed to achieve learning objectives
☐ the methodology employed to assess the achievements of learning objectives
☐ the achievement of learning objectives
☐ the environment in which learning takes place
☐ the behaviour of the personnel in the school
☐ the guideline systems employed in the school
☐ the induction and guidance procedures adopted
☐ the resources allocated to the curriculum
☐ the prevailing "culture" of the school

Curriculum can be summed up as the totality of all experiences, both planned and unplanned, which a student undergoes.

2. WHAT SHAPES THE CURRICULUM

2.1 The organisational context

The processes of curriculum development and the systems for assessment and certification exist in an organisational context. That context (in each country) is specific to its history, culture and structure but, in all of them, it depends on interactions among a given set of actors at the national, intermediate and local level. The intermediate level may be geographical or hierarchical e. g. a regional or a non-governmental organisation (NGO) situated between the central planners and policy makers and the local institutions responsible for implementation. Policy can be made or reinterpreted at each level. The NGOs will include those umbrella or integrating mechanisms which are mandated by government to bring together the education and labour market research and development functions for vocational education and training (VET) awards.

Two diagrams follow. The first shows the interactions of actors and processes at the different levels within a system (who does what at each level). The second illustrates processes in the development of qualifications. It demonstrates the complex procedures of consultation, decision-making and negotiation which take place to define curricular "achievement".

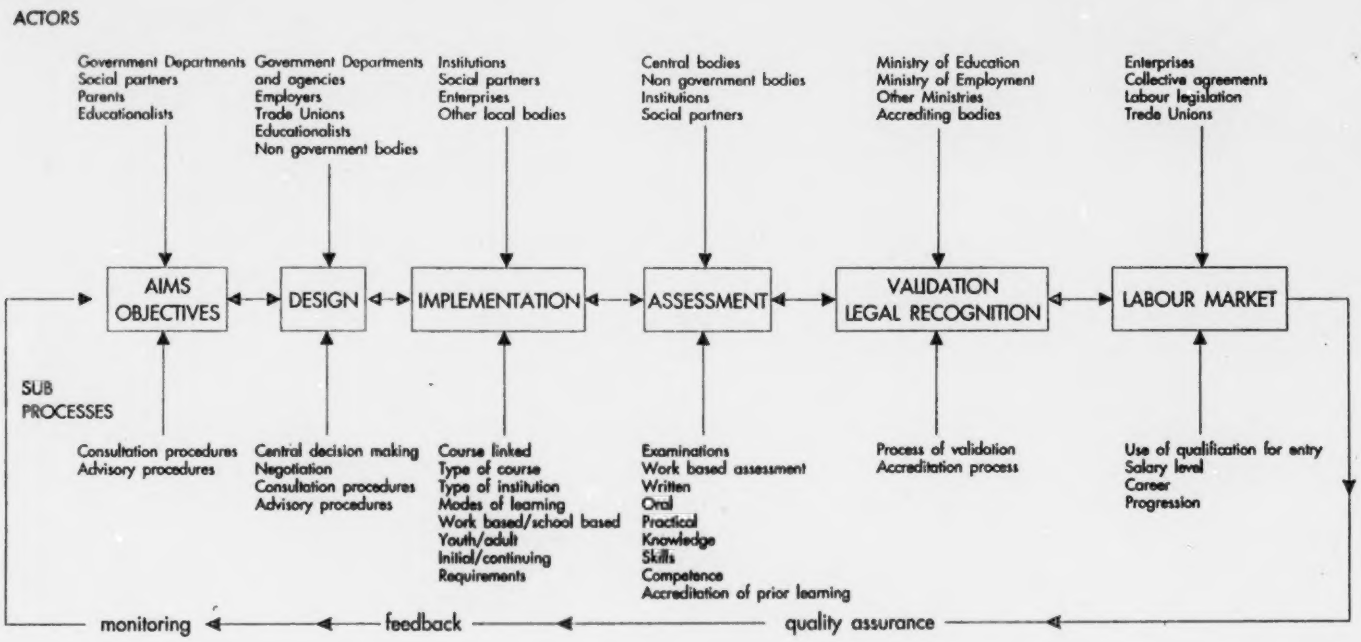
Diagram 1

THE INTERACTION OF THE ACTORS AND PROCESSES AT THE DIFFERENT LEVELS WITHIN THE SYSTEMS

LEVELS	ACTORS	PROCESSES
NATIONAL	ministries social partners awarding and accrediting bodies Chambers of Industry, Commerce and of Crafts "umbrella organisations"	policy and planning determining policy central examinations evaluation; monitoring validation and inspection
INTERMEDIATE (geografical or hierarchical)	government agencies social partners intergrating mechanisms Chambers of Industry, Commerce and of Crafts regional authorities	(re)interpreting policy elaboration of diplomas and certificates design re design validation
LOCAL	institutions enterprises social partners Chambers of Industry, Commerce andof Crafts local government	implementation teaching/learning assessment orientation/guidance

Diagram 2

PROCESSES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS: SYSTEM FLOW

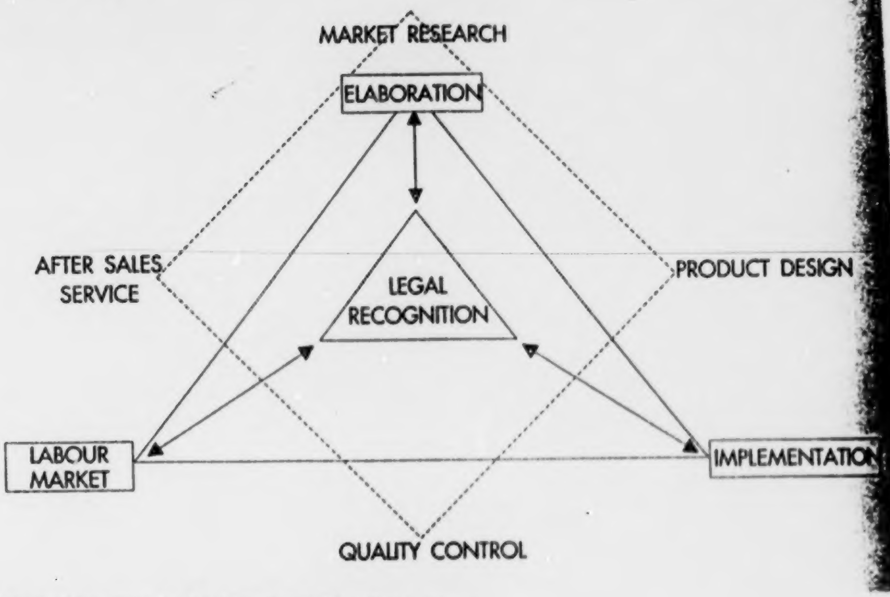

ACTORS
Government Departments
Social partners
Parents
Educationalists
Government Departments
and agencies
Employers
Trade Unions
Educationalists
Non government bodies
Institutions
Social partners
Enterprises
Other local bodies
Central bodies
Non government bodies
Institutions
Social partners
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Employment
Other Ministries
Accrediting bodies
Enterprises
Collective agreements
Labour legislation
Trade Unions
AIMS
OBJECTIVES
DESIGN
IMPLEMENTATION
ASSESSMENT
VALIDATION
LEGAL RECOGNITION
LABOUR MARKET
SUB
PROCESSES
Consultation procedures
Advisory procedures
Central decision making
Negotiation
Consultation procedures
Advisory procedures
Course linked
Type of course
Type of institution
Modes of learning
Work based/school based
Youth/adult
Initial/continuing
Requirements
Examinations
Work based assessment
Written
Oral
Practical
Knowledge
Skills
Competence
Accreditation of prior learning
Process of validation
Accreditation process
Use of qualification for entry
Salary level
Career
Progression
monitoring
feedback
quality assurance

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

(The two diagrams appear in the CEDEFOP publication Systems and Procedures of Certification of Qualifications in the European Community, EIESP, Jean Gordon, 1993).

Diagram 3

PROCESSES



Policy making may be broken down into three stages:

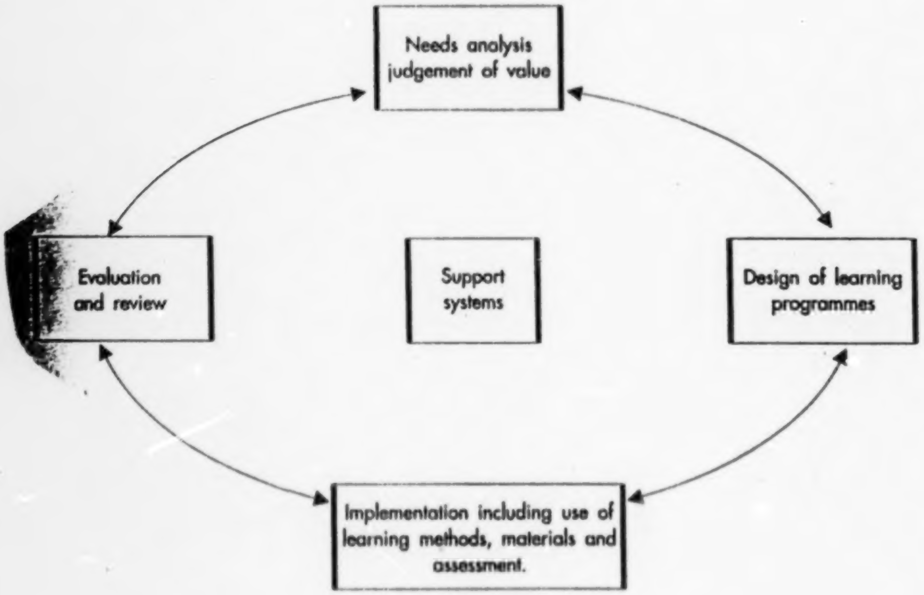
- ☐ policy formulation: considering the possible policy options
- ☐ policy determination: which one to take forward
- ☐ policy implementation: or executive responsibility

Policy making for the curriculum occurs at all three levels of the illustrations dependent on the nature of decentralisation.

Diagrams 3 and 4 below are variations of a systems model illustrating curriculum development. The first is the classic British (Further Education Unit) model (further development in Diagram 7). It illustrates a holistic view of the curriculum embracing development, content and delivery. The second is a variation using management/marketing terminology more familiar to employers and the employment world. The classic four-point marketing model "market research, product design, quality control and after-sales service" has been superimposed to align the processes of qualification with their responsiveness to the labour market and with terminology more readily understood in the world of work. Applied to vocational education and training, market research is the identification of existing and potential client groups, their characteristics and needs. Product design or development involves creating appropriate courses and programmes and making sure that the information about them reaches potentially interested individuals. Monitoring the courses and programmes both during and after delivery constitutes the quality control required to ensure that client needs/demands are met as fully as possible. After-sales service pursues the consequences for students in terms of job take-up, skills acquired and possibilities of progression, i. e. "how it all worked out in the real world" (Bilbrough, Parkes and Thomson, 1988). It is a model which lends itself to relatively independent schools/colleges in a local market context. Performance indicators are a necessary complement to the quality control and after-sales elements.

Diagram 4

PROCESSES OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT


Needs analysis judgement of value
Evaluation and review
Support systems
Design of learning programmes
Implementation including use of learning methods, materials and assessment.

2.2 The political agenda

The policy priorities and projects for education and training of the European Commission affect the immediate preoccupations of the member states. What the European Union/Commission is implementing now reflects OECD research preoccupations of five years previously. The LEONARDO programme of the Commission reflects, therefore, not current thinking, but current practice.

The White Paper Teaching and Learning: Towards The Learning Society Luxembourg 1996, is a product of Directorates General XXII and V which cover education training, youth, employment, industrial relations and social affairs responsibilities. It is a modest document intellectually but an accurate reflection of European (and world-wide) concerns.

The Paper identifies three factors of upheaval:

☐ the impact of the information society
☐ the impact of internationalisation and the global economy
☐ the impact of scientific and technical change

One of its central calls is for new means of accreditation and more flexible approaches to certification, including personal skill cards, which will reflect the acquisition of competences and skills particularly where the testing of such competences and skills can be separated from any prescription of the processes by which they have been acquired.

The White Paper makes the assumption that "Information technologies have radically changed the nature of work and the organisation of production. These changes are currently deeply affecting European society".

The White Paper complements Michael Young's comments in a separate publication (1993) :

"If one accepts the argument of many researchers that the combined pressures of new technology and global competition will force industrial economies to abandon the forms of work organisation based upon mental/manual divisions because they can no longer be a basis for a country to compete in a global economy, then traditional academic, vocational, technical divisions for the curriculum need to be overcome".

The White Paper also argues for a broad-based approach to knowledge to build up individual self-reliance and an occupational capacity responsive to adaptation and change. Jarl Bengtsson (1993) of OECD complements this point elsewhere with a comment that "changes on the demand side are much more rapid and congruent across enterprises and nations than those on the supply side. A new model of integrated new technology, working organisation and school formation, and with particular emphasis on flexibility of human resources, seems to be gradually replacing a Tayloristic principle of organising the enterprise and the work base" (Jarl Bengtsson, Labour Markets in the Future, European Journal of Education, Volume 28 N° 2, 1993, Ed. Parkes).

We seem to be saying two things: the first is that social and economic structures are a pre-disposition for educational structures and their reform. Policy and change in the former are a necessary condition of change in the latter. Secondly, that shifts now occurring in social and particularly in economic and information structures will make a significant difference to the traditional qualification and curricular routes (traditionally divided into academic, technical and vocational) and to accreditation, certification processes. This is the line pursued by the Commission although it is a line that may be ahead of the will of individual member states to adapt their qualification frameworks. The assumptions about the impact of the global on traditional curricular routes may also be premature.

On the other hand, when we are discussing current practice in curriculum development, certification and assessment, we need to question the (future) continuity of what we are currently defining. As above, qualifications and curricular routes are traditionally divided tripartite among academic (or general) technical and vocational. From these divisions arise issues moving from parity of esteem to exclusion. Recent studies looking at the historic, or class, or sociological or employment or transnational bases of tripartism (1997) come to the conclusion that whatever their background, psychologically people do not divide into these neat categories. They may be tall or short in stature, high or low achievers but, as far as academic or vocational ability and aptitudes are concerned, they are multi-faceted. A multi-choice or a progression approach is likely to be more appropriate than an arbitrary separation of routes at a given moment in time. In short, individuals may find a general or a technical or a vocational approach appropriate at different, though not necessarily consecutive points in their development.

A good example is Germany, where experience in the Dual System (and qualification as a skilled worker) is now an accepted aspect of progression onto higher education; or the Netherlands, with a multi-track approach to general and vocational routes.

One of the more interesting sections in the White Paper is the suggestion that we have come to "the end of debate on educational principles" illustrated by the following extracts:

Most of these debates now appear to have come to an end;

☐ a broad knowledge base and training for employment are no longer contradictory or separate things; there is increasing recognition of the importance of general knowledge in using vocational skills
☐ bridges are being built between schools and business sectors
☐ these show that the ideological and cultural barriers which separated education and enterprise are breaking down, benefiting both
☐ in line with the traditions in the member states, this co-operation is reflected in initial and continuing training
☐ the principle of equal rights in education is being applied increasingly in the context of equality of opportunity
☐ the dawning of the information society which initially caused misgivings within the teaching profession has now revealed new demands for education and training and has

started to renew teaching approaches

These are interesting assumptions...

2.3 Competences

The White Paper associates the idea of smart cards and indeed a European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) with a competence-based approach which (as in the UK) may define learning objectives in the form of outcomes and standards independent of any course, programme or mode of learning. Thus, rather than design curricula to meet assumed needs, representative occupational bodies identify "occupational standards" which are clear and precise statements describing what performance means in distinct occupational areas. The British, through national vocational qualifications (NVQs) are somewhat ahead in this game but other Union countries (including France and Germany) are now considering their relevance to accreditation, and to consequent curricular profiles.

If we examine (in several cultures) how we unwrap the meaning of the term "competences" we will find ourselves with a variety of definitions. We also have to ask whether we are identifying a "competence" as a narrowly-based, specific skill which can be certificated (such as bending a metal pipe) or whether we are looking at three-dimensional competences defined by life skills. We also have to unwrap whether the testing or measurement of "competences" enable us to imply the knowledge and intellectual understanding that is not being directly tested. For example, knowledge and understanding of constructs have to be inferred from observable behaviour just as much as "competence" itself.

The debate on "competences" is summed up by an American anecdote which goes back to the beginning of the 1980s. It concerns a bag person (someone who carries their belongings in a black plastic sack on their back). Talking about the meaning of their life, the person says: "all my life I have wanted to be somebody; now I know I should have been more specific...".

2.4 The building blocks of a successful VET system (both initial and continuing education and training)

From a general point of view, a successful VET system (in no matter what cultural and historic context) needs to possess the following ingredients:

☐ to be able to define occupational sector priorities
☐ to be able to identify the appropriate occupational sector competences and skills required

☐ to be able to turn these into curricular profiles and programmes
☐ to deliver these at institutional/school level

The elements above have to be undertaken in the context of establishing a balance between general and vocational provision and in the context of a transparent and accepted approach to standards, certification and qualifications/

☐ to develop both a national and local infrastructure for educational/enterprise relations and responsiveness
☐ to encourage private as well as public sector training capacity in a mixed economy

The above has to be related to the context of financing mechanisms within an appropriate time scale: changes in the location of decision making (e. g. decentralisation); a credible research base; the development of management capacity; the acquisition of appropriate tools in management and in the area of curriculum development.

These somewhat instrumental building blocks derive from EIESP working with the reconstruction of VET systems in former socialist countries. In 1994 a mixed consultancy team worked with the Ministry of Education in Albania to determine the organising principles of the VET curricula. Apart from Albanian colleagues the team represented the German, Dutch, British and Norwegian systems plus representation from the PETRA programme of the Commission. The team consisted of working equivalents to Albanian Ministry colleagues. Thus, the German consultant actually ran a VET system in one of the German Länder; the Norwegian consultant was responsible for the general education component of Reform 94 (the reform of vocational and upper secondary education in Norway). While directing their attention to Albania, the team determined that national VET systems, irrespective in which country, should be characterised by having the following (quality) features:

☐ VET systems must be attractive, e. g. offering opportunities for access to tertiary level provision
☐ VET must be responsive to labour market needs at the national/regional and, preferably, local level. It must make best use of all available information on trends on the labour market.
☐ VET systems must be broad based, i. e. they are to pass on occupation-specific skills and knowledge, to lay the foundation for continuing training and to prepare young people for active citizenship
☐ VET systems must be flexible as regards delivery, assessment and certification procedures
☐ VET systems must be effective, i. e. they must strive towards bringing the maximum number of young people up to the highest level of qualification standards
☐ VET systems must be a collaborative effort, i. e. they must be based on a partnership model involving all relevant parties – such as training authorities, social partners, parents – in their activities
☐ VET systems must be an integrated part of the overall education structure, i. e. each stage must prepare for the following stage and switch-overs from education to training (and back) should be possible

- VET systems must be cost effective, i. e. making optimal use of available resources/equipment to provide all types and levels of training, including continuing training
- VET systems must be simple, i. e. the organisational structure and division of responsibilities for the provision of training should be as simple as possible

2.5 Policy issues impacting on curriculum development

The preoccupying issues explored in articles of the European Journal of Education over the last ten years have reflected key elements of reform processes and the general aims and objectives of different VET systems, thus:

- reforming mainstream qualifications so they correspond more closely to the needs of labour market integration
- developing suitable provision to deal with the problems of low achievers and to reduce the rate of young people leaving school with no meaningful qualifications. This has led to experimenting the different forms of provision and taking a critical look at courses on offer, access, qualifications, funding and the organising principles of the curriculum.
- opening up access to qualifications by building progression routes, horizontally and vertically through the education and training systems. That has meant opening up systems, creating bridging routes and equivalencies as well as attempting to reduce unnecessary barriers.

These preoccupations have been matched by: diminishing resources (reduced budgets, rising number of students, lower employment investment etc.). Coping with these changes has led systems to rationalise in a number of ways. For example, retrospectively, the introduction of performance indicators is justified in terms of quality control but early performance indicators were quantity-dominated and centred on lowering unit costs. Education systems have been progressively driven towards efficiency rather than effectiveness criteria as governments have attempted to shift the burden of funding towards regions (decentralisation) and employers (education/employer links, alternance, etc.). Funding mechanisms have become inextricably linked with broader policy issues on a chicken and egg basis (Gordon & Parkes, 1995)

The changing location of decision-making may bring essential decision-making down to school level. But along with it come the constraints of managing diminishing resources and teaching on lower unit costs. The British have discovered that the removal of VET from the local authorities has resulted in a national-level non-governmental organisation (NGO) the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) which has so reduced the unit costs that some schools are on the verge of corporate bankruptcy. Autonomy has its price.

3. INTERNATIONAL CRITERIA FOR MODERNISED CURRICULA

3.1 The organisation of the curriculum

The assumption of changing skill demands from industry and commerce impacts upon the projected outcomes of education and therefore the organisation of the curriculum. The debate on enhanced esteem for VET is part of a drive to expand education and training opportunities and improve standards generally as a major political aspect of educational reform (see the Commission's White Paper). VET is asked to become more "general" in its approach to an individual's life preparation, blurring the differences between general education and vocational preparation. In response to changes in industrial structures most countries are reducing the number of specific vocational specialisms. In the Nordic countries there is the case of Sweden: from 172 to between 14 and 16 specifications with similar trends in Norway and Finland. Within the Dual System in Germany there is also a reduction.

If we examine the curricular framework we should ask whether provision ought to be basically subject-based, or course-based? How should the organising principles be defined? Is a modular structure more appropriate for a common provision and certification for initial skill and continuing training and for a credit-based approach linked to the assessment of competences?

Another case for modularisation (as opposed to a subject- or course-based approach) is the capacity to provide for individual differences and therefore it is used as a feature of innovation for disadvantaged students. Modularisation offers rather more flexibility and transfer within different VET streams and outside them - the "pick and mix" approach.

The overall benefits of modularisation can be summed up as offering:

☐ individual differentiation

☐ credit accumulation and transfer
☐ credits providing additional motivation for students
☐ curriculum flexibility in terms of transferable skills
☐ pedagogical reform to promote more learner-centred activity
☐ and of course economic responsiveness

Modules can be more easily tailored to local or company requirements.

Modules can be seen to be relatively institution-free and adapted to different types of training, for instance, for full and part-time, initial and continuing, school- and work-based provision.

Modularisation can also be easily geared to open learning approaches.

In summary, the protagonists for a modular approach would argue for a more efficient use of resources; the enhancement of choice for students; flexibility in provision; facility to vary the pace, timing and delivery of training; the capacity to be innovative; increased participation rates and better utilisation of facilities.

Modularisation inside schools, once decided upon, has clear organisational consequences for:

☐ financial management

☐ academic and organisational structure (that is the way in which teaching/learning are organised and resourced)

☐ human resources in the way they are deployed

☐ the relationship of the school with its local, regional and national environment

For managers the implications are:

☐ new criteria for the selection and employment of staff (and staff development)

☐ agreement upon how modular and open-learning systems can be resourced, monitored and evaluated

☐ the provision of necessary accommodation, materials, equipment and support services and the adaptation of existing organisational structures

☐ the adoption of new curricular approaches with implications for policy making, resource allocation, managing boundary transactions, enhancing staff skills, innovative capacity, management systems and organisational structures

On the other hand, once out of the lamp, the modular genie lends itself to awesome organisational complexity which few educational managers and no ministry officials are likely to understand or cope with (Parkes 1997). The argument, as above, for modularisation, is seductive BUT it can create organisational chaos – for example adding exponentially to the number of necessary interactions among timetabling complexities.

3.2 Evaluation

Quality control is dealt with elsewhere in this portfolio of papers and I would add only a few words on efficiency, effectiveness, quality and quantity performance indicators, having worked with these over a long period in the UK (Responsive College Programme, 1985 to 1988).

Quantitative performance indicators can be seen in terms of collecting hard statistics e. g. numerical data on students leaving early, finding jobs, progressing to further study. These are one aspect but performance indicators (quantity and quality) relate to the outcome of local, regional or national political decisions; on what counts? And indeed, how it is counted? And why it is counted.

For the purposes of this paper I simply indicate it as an issue with appropriate illustrations. Diagram 5 below and diagram 6 which follows both illustrate the organisational context and the technical complexity of input and output measures.

Diagram 5

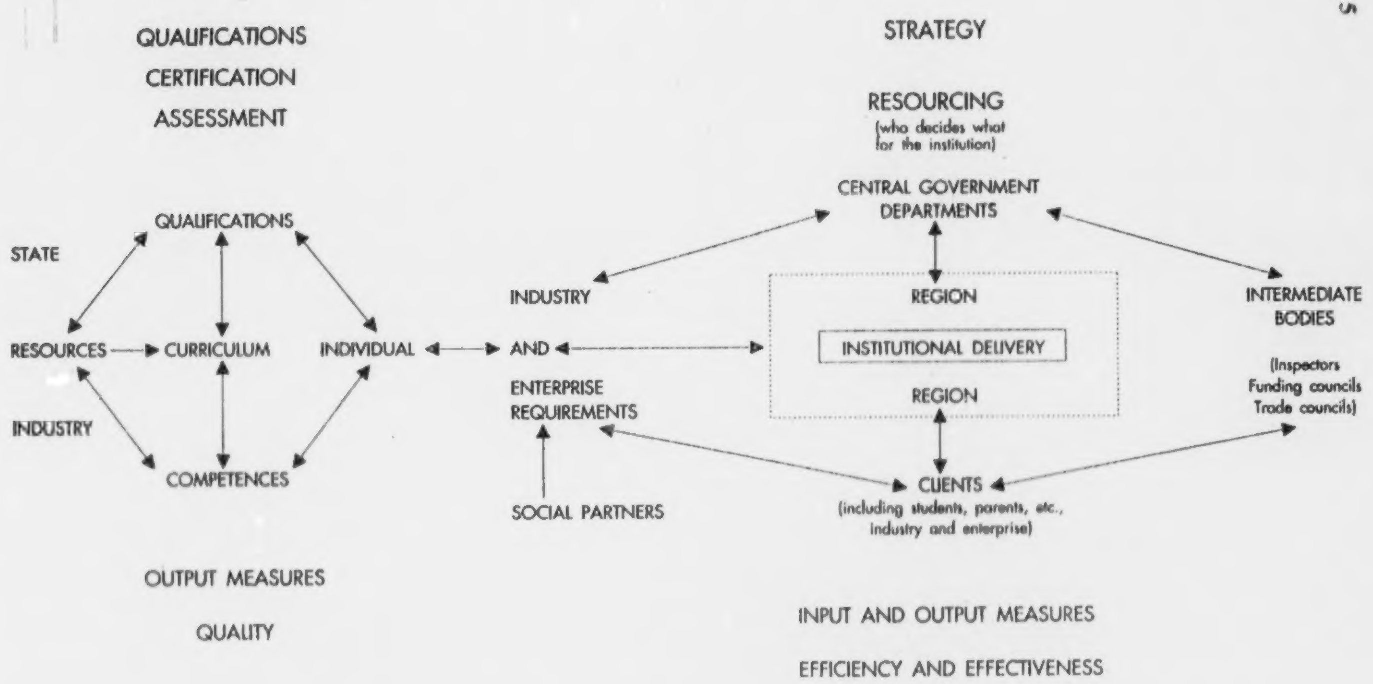
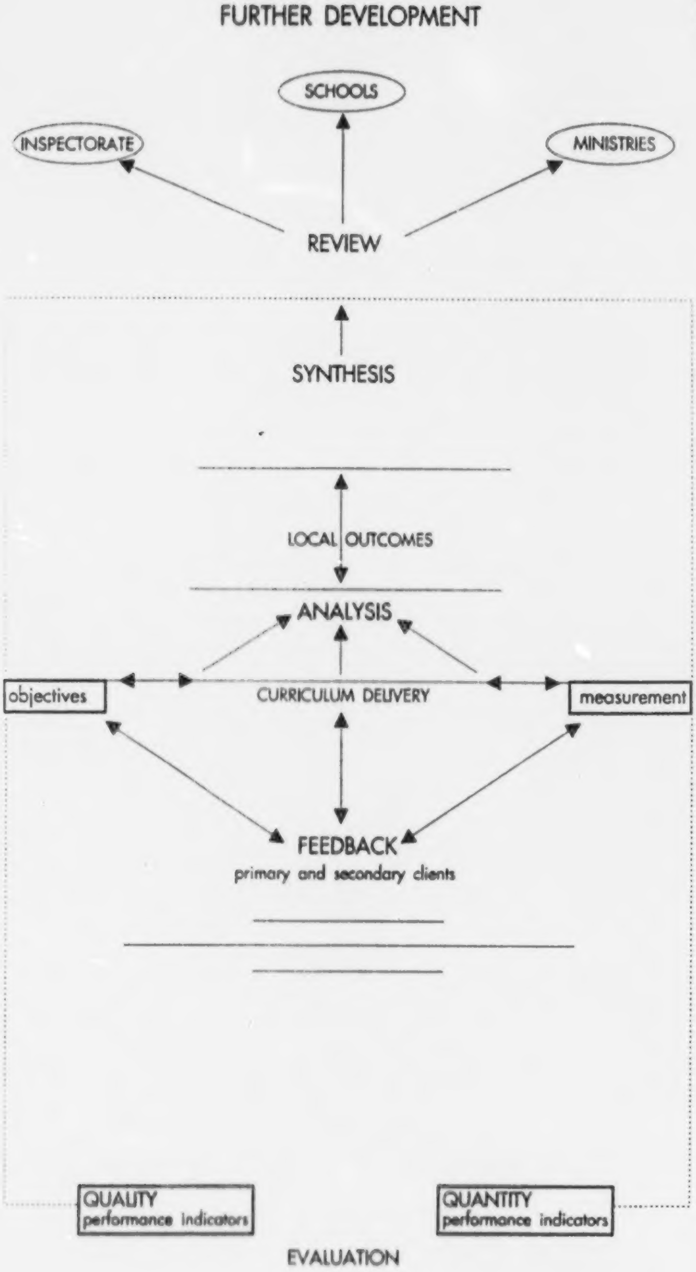

QUALIFICATIONS
CERTIFICATION
ASSESSMENT
STATE
QUALIFICATIONS
RESOURCES
CURRICULUM
INDIVIDUAL
INDUSTRY
COMPETENCES
OUTPUT MEASURES
QUALITY
STRATEGY
RESOURCING
(who decides what for the institution)
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS
INDUSTRY
AND
ENTERPRISE REQUIREMENTS
SOCIAL PARTNERS
REGION
INSTITUTIONAL DELIVERY
REGION
INTERMEDIATE BODIES
(Inspectors
Funding councils
Trade councils)
CLIENTS
(including students, parents, etc., industry and enterprise)
INPUT AND OUTPUT MEASURES
EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Diagram 6


FURTHER DEVELOPMENT
SCHOOLS
INSPECTORATE
MINISTRIES
REVIEW
SYNTHESIS
LOCAL OUTCOMES
ANALYSIS
objectives
CURRICULUM DELIVERY
measurement
FEEDBACK
primary and secondary clients
QUALITY
performance indicators
QUANTITY
performance indicators
EVALUATION

3.3 Modernised curricula in vocational education and training: criteria and guidelines

In 1994/1995 the European Institute of Education and Social Policy (EIESP) was commissioned by the Task Force for Training and Human Resources in Poland (BKKK) to draw up standards and criteria for base curricula in five selected subjects within the vocational and technical school system. The Standards and Evaluation Committee (SEC) comprised five teams of two experts (each). One external and one local expert were charged with drafting the criteria for modernised curricula to be developed for 60 pilot schools. The five subjects were: introduction to computer education; physics; a foreign language (English); introduction to the world of work; environmental education. The team leader and external subject experts were chosen to introduce a range of appropriate national and transnational experiences in order that Polish colleagues could position themselves against a number of national and international standards and derive criteria appropriate for Poland. The "experts" came from France, Germany, England, Norway and of course Poland. The five specialisms identified are a mix of subjects (e. g. physics and a modern language); fields (environmental education); programme (introduction to the world of work); and cross-curricular skills (computer studies and language).

The broad criteria for new or revised curricula given by the Polish Ministry were:

a) a curriculum up to European standards
b) a curriculum up to the equivalent of Matura level

The two categories of schools selected were those with the 4-year full-time course in the vocational lycea and the 4- to 5-year course in the secondary vocational schools technika. (The bias is towards work in the technical schools and towards higher education in the lycea).

Members of the Standards and Evaluation Committee (chaired by David Parkes) were encouraged by the Ministry to take into account the following factors:

☐ an inter-disciplinary/cross-curricula or transversal approach
☐ a project-based or active learning approach
☐ employer/education links
☐ specialist provision for specific VET qualifications
☐ a modular approach (however defined)

The virtue of Polish VET provision being positioned among a number of different country positions was evident, for example in terms of identifying and defining the use of measurable outcomes, whether in terms of "occupational competences" or "competences" or "attainment" or "achievement". How we measure what students have achieved depends very much on the cultural and structural context. In each country there is a separate coming together of technical solutions with political need and an appropriate organisational framework.

In order not to impose too rigid a frame on the separate curriculum development team the Committee members did not impose a single understanding of the nature of competence or attainment, but rather moved towards a broad agreement on the overall direction the curriculum should take. Consequently, it retained a common-sense distinction between what students might know and what students can do but did not try to pre-impose a universal terminology.

3.4 The curriculum framework

As above, the different ways of putting students, teachers and subject matter together, have organisation and resourcing consequences; the curriculum can be constructed on a subject base or course or programme base or with a modular approach. At the simplest level, a module is the breaking down of a syllabus or syllabuses into short sections that can be built up in various ways and in variously connected sequences leading to certification. The use of this term and its applications vary widely depending on the system. There is much diversity in national training systems; much diversity in the concept of modules and the context in which they are applied and limited experience of actual modular reform. Since the multi-national SEC team did not want to tie the hands of the curriculum developers by adopting a uniform approach it merely pointed to the possible advantages of adopting a building-block approach beyond the base curriculum which offered the advantages of flexibility and choice but also gave weight to some of the other criteria elaborated above. As with questions of outcomes or attainment), a broad direction was agreed by the Standards and Evaluation Committee rather than a rigid position.

All this is by way of introduction to the fact that alongside the development of individual subject and programme criteria the SEC's holistic view of curriculum development was as a systems process (as in the FEU diagram). The five-nation team agreed the following general criteria for:

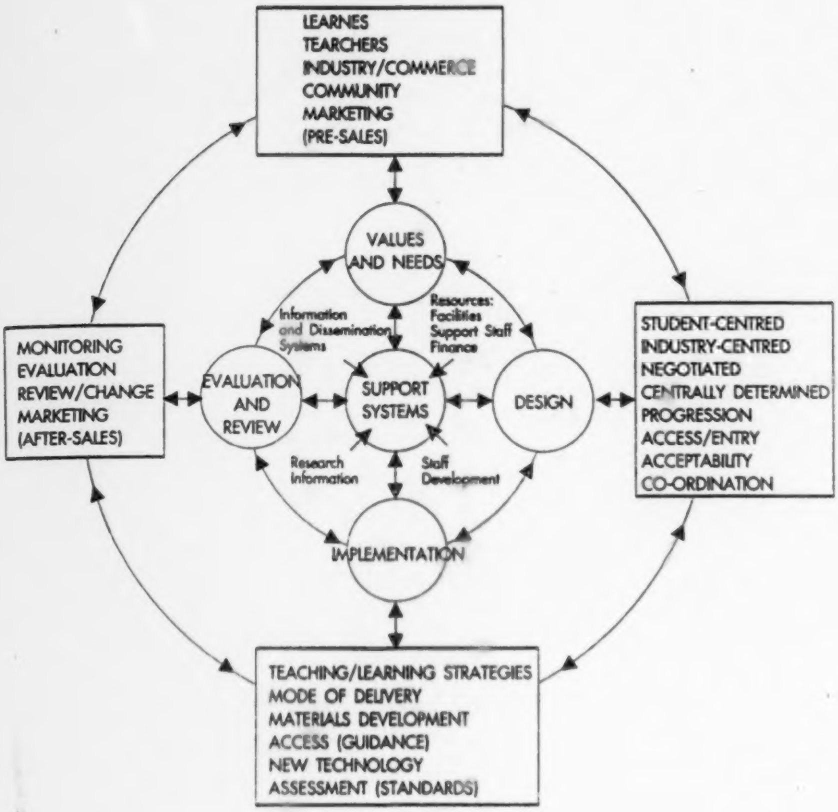
a) the general aims of the curriculum
b) its defining characteristics
c) core elements
d) transition to the world of work

The classification is derived from the work of the former English Further Education Unit, a semi-autonomous body attached to the former Department of Education acting in the area of curriculum development. What is interesting in the criteria that follow is that they were agreed by all five national sets of experts working across all five curricula fields, that is, Polish, French, German, English, Norwegian colleagues in the context of physics, foreign language, environmental education, computer science and introduction to the world of work (1994, 1995).

They start as a coherent set of aims, objectives and targets.

Diagram 7

Processes of Curriculum Development


LEARNES
TEARCHERS
INDUSTRY/COMMERCE
COMMUNITY
MARKETING
(PRE-SALES)
VALUES AND NEEDS
Information and Dissemination Systems
Resources: Facilities Support Staff Finance
MONITORING
EVALUATION
REVIEW/CHANGE
MARKETING
(AFTER-SALES)
EVALUATION AND REVIEW
SUPPORT SYSTEMS
DESIGN
STUDENT-CENTRED
INDUSTRY-CENTRED
NEGOTIATED
CENTRALLY DETERMINED
PROGRESSION
ACCESS/ENTRY
ACCEPTABILITY
CO-ORDINATION
Research Information
Staff Development
IMPLEMENTATION
TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES
MODE OF DELIVERY
MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT
ACCESS (GUIDANCE)
NEW TECHNOLOGY
ASSESSMENT (STANDARDS)

INNER CIRCLE AND HUB –	OUTER CIRCLE –
The curriculum development cycle	Features of each stage in the cycle

The general aims of the curriculum

- ☐ appropriate learning opportunities, regardless of gender, race, age and ability
- ☐ opportunities for all learners to establish and develop a recognised competence base of knowledge, skills and experience sufficient to facilitate progression into employment, further and higher education and training
- ☐ an understanding of the local and national economic and social environment, to promote an appreciation of the variety of available adult roles in society
- ☐ a basis for learners to increase their self-awareness, to appraise realistically their potential and prospects, and to become progressively responsible for negotiating their own personal development

Defining characteristics

- ☐ relevance: provided by analysing the needs of the learners and the receiving agencies; integrating education, training, work and other aspects of life; placing a value on experience; developing a negotiated curriculum; and ensuring a balance between competing needs
- ☐ flexibility: provided by timetabling to facilitate learning; allowing for individual differences in pace and style of learning; using formative, profiled assessment; introducing modularity to allow credit accumulation; and developing a curriculum to meet the needs of learners by negotiation and interaction
- ☐ competence: provided by designing programmes that deliver a broad range of skills, knowledge, experience and attitudes; ensuring that the programme is integrated and includes work-based learning; developing a better awareness of standards and the ability to recognise and encourage appropriate performance by learners
- ☐ learner-centredness: this involves arranging educational provision so that learners are involved in negotiating the content, style and targets for their programmes – this is often facilitated by valuing their experience and engaging in profiled formative assessment
- ☐ maximised accessibility: this is about ensuring that there are no artificial barriers to programmes, such as unnecessary entry requirements, and that every effort is made to provide for all of the potential learners in a locality
- ☐ integrated curriculum: this involves making connections between the various elements of learning – between the (subject) components of a programme, between activities in an institution and outside it, and between past, present and future experience
- ☐ guidance and counselling: this comprises a wide range of support for learners including educational, vocational and personal guidance provided as a part of both learning programmes and the institutional infrastructure
- ☐ personal development: an important consideration in the design of programmes is to ensure that there is both opportunity and encouragement for the development of personal qualities such as effectiveness and role awareness
- ☐ optimised progression: all learners should have the opportunity to achieve their own personal targets and maximise their progress on a particular programme in order to advance to another programme or employment
- ☐ equality of opportunity and experience: this is a starting point and implies that institutions should move from equality of access, through equality of treatment;

towards equality of outcomes (having equal regard for different outcomes)

Core elements

☐ Adaptability: to develop a flexibility of attitude and ability to learn sufficient to cope with the future changes in technology, career and lifestyle.
☐ Role Transition: to bring about an informed perspective as to the roles and status of a young person in an adult, multicultural society, including the world of work, in order to form responsible and realistic decision making as to future opportunities.
☐ Physical Skills: to enable an appropriate development of physical and manipulative skills in both vocational and leisure contexts, and an appreciation of these skills in others.
☐ Interpersonal Skills: to bring about an ability to be sensitive to and tolerant of the needs of others, and to develop satisfactory personal relationships.
☐ Values: to foster a reasoned set of positive social and moral values applicable to issues in contemporary society.
☐ Communication/Numeration: to develop levels of achievement in language, communication and numeration skills to meet the basic demands of contemporary society and to provide a foundation appropriate to the acquisition of further skills.
☐ Problem solving: to develop a capacity to approach various kinds of problems methodically and effectively, to undertake courses of action, evaluate them and modify these actions accordingly.
☐ Coping: to develop the necessary skills for coping with everyday situations together with the ability to collaborate with others and to contribute to their well-being.
☐ Society: to provide young people with a knowledge of the workings of modern society and to develop abilities both to cope with it and to contribute to its development.
☐ Information Technology: to provide an introduction to the implications and applications of information technology to society, the individual and to the processes of learning.
☐ Learning Skills: to develop sufficient competence and confidence in a variety of independent learning skills to maximise individual potential in work and leisure.
☐ Health Education: to develop an understanding of health and human development sufficient for young people to choose how they can maintain a healthy lifestyle.
☐ Creativity: to enable young people to become aware of their own creativity and to develop this and their powers of appreciation and critical judgement for vocational, aesthetic and leisure progress.
☐ Environment: to foster an appreciation of the physical and technological environment and its relationship with social and scientific issues and principles.
☐ Science/Technology: to promote an understanding of the nature and discipline of science, and its relationship to technology via the process of design and principles.

Transition to the world of work

☐ balance (between general, vocational and technical elements)
☐ vocational relevance (qualifications/skills of direct value at work – having the confidence of industry – relating to potential employment)
☐ practical transferability (appreciation of the practical applications of the outcome of their studies)
☐ enterprise (development of initiative, motivation, enterprise – encouragement of

initiative)

☐ planned work experience (bridge to working life through planned work experience as integral part of the programme)

ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Olivier BERTRAND

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade, many countries have been increasingly concerned with assessment and certification of vocational qualifications. This can be explained by rising costs, while financial constraints are growing, which imply more control over costs and efficiency; a new concern for the specific problems of the adult population; the need for national standards, in order to guarantee the quality of training and to meet the changing requirements of the labour market.

Nearly all the literature on assessment and certification concerns industrialized countries, but these problems now arise in Central and Eastern Europe and in a number of developing countries. It is therefore necessary to take a new look at the main issues, keeping in mind their particular concerns, but also considering whether the experience of industrialized countries may be of any use for the others.

1. MAIN PROBLEMS

Assessment and certification take place in the middle of a process which can be summarized as follows:

☐ defining training objectives
☐ design of training programmes
☐ delivery of training
☐ assessment
☐ certification
☐ recognition by the labour market

Concerning vocational education and training, assessment refers to objectives which have an educational and an economic dimension. Certification is the formal (or institutional) result of assessment and should normally be taken into account by employers. Assessment and certification have to be seen from a global perspective, at the

Several basic questions may be raised to begin:

Why?: the role of certification

a) From the point of view of the education and training system, certification:
  ☐ may guarantee the quality of training
  ☐ may regulate the access to the next level

b) For individuals, certification may guarantee their investment in training, their opportunities for further training and for finding a job and may be an element of their personal status.

c) For the employers, certification is a way to assess the ability and competence of the people that they would like to recruit. It is a signal, which allows for a proper communication depends however:

  - ☐ upon the type of occupation: regulated occupations (e. g. doctors, architects) are accessible only to those people who have acquired the proper certification; non-regulated occupations (the majority) are accessible with a variety of qualifications
  - ☐ upon the type of labour market: workers are easily mobile between enterprises within occupational labour markets (e. g. skilled workers in Germany) and their qualification remains valid. Within internal labour markets, it is within the enterprise that the qualification is acquired and that mobility takes place.

If employers may find some value in the certification process, they may also have some reservations:

- ☐ if they invest in the training of their own employees, but if these are later recruited by another enterprise (or worse, by a competitor), their investment is lost and they may be reluctant to provide training leading to a formal qualification
- ☐ employers may fear that employees may use their formal qualification to support their claim for a pay rise
- ☐ they may simply thing that the certification process of their workers is costly and unnecessary

d) For the society as a whole:

- ☐ certification may contribute to the equality of training opportunities between providers and between regions
- ☐ assessment and certification may be an element of an overall policy to raise the qualification level of the workforce and therefore the competitiveness of the economy
- ☐ a nationwide system of certification may facilitate the mobility of workers, whose qualifications are recognized wherever they have been acquired

In order to satisfy these various roles, the system of assessment and certification should as far as possible ensure:

- ☐ transparency and visibility for both learners and employers
- ☐ transferability within the system of education and training
- ☐ portability (recognition by employers) within the labour market

Certification for whom? The target population

Traditionally, certification was mostly intended for young people at the end of their initial training. With the growing interest for life-long learning, there has been more concern for adults (see below).

What should be assessed?

From that point of view, there are roughly three different approaches:

- the first one refers to the knowledge and know-how possessed by an individual, which are not specific to a particular job and are supposed to be transferable from one work situation to the other
- the second one refers to the knowledge and know-how which are supposedly required to be employed in an occupation. They are integrated and are supposed to reflect the stable image of an occupation
- the third one refers to the specific skills, or competences which are required to perform a particular task or job. They may be fragmented into separate units (implying a modular organization of training and of assessment) and they may evolve over time, but are not easily transferred from one work situation to the other.

These approaches are reflected to a large extent in the three case studies which will be presented below. The concept of competence, which is attached to the third one, has been also promoted by employers in order to emphasize their changing requirements. The problem is that there are many definitions for the term competence and various interpretations of the differences with the more traditional concepts of skills and qualifications. Basically, the idea is that competence implies less emphasis on the potentialities of an individual and more on actual ability to perform a job; or competence would be closely related to action, but would be unstable, whereas skills would be more lasting, and more related to training and experience.

Concerning adults, the emphasis is now put the recognition or accreditation of prior experience. Most countries are willing to develop a methodology to this effect, but it raises at least two questions:

- should it attempt to recognize the various elements of this experience (successive steps in an occupational life) or the resulting knowledge and know-how (implying some kind of examination)?
- is the aim to allow for further studies or to consider only the employment situation?

The Irish concept of "accreditation of prior experience, achievement and learning" is an to synthetise the various approaches. But it would seem that in any case it requires a lot of individual attention to each personal situation, so that it may be difficult to develop a simple system for large-scale assessment.

Who is in charge?

The objectives of the assessment of vocational qualifications reflect the objectives assigned to the training programmes and should normally take into account the requirements of the labour market, but also educational considerations. Depending upon the emphasis given to these elements, but also on each institutional and social context, the main responsibility for this rests rather with educational authorities, or with employers, representatives, or both.

The institutional responsibility for certification may belong to the State, to the schools, to the employers (when they provide the training) or to independent institutions.

How to proceed with assessment?

Assessment may be a continuous process or may be achieved trough a single examination, which itself may be organized by teachers inside the training institution, or by outside examiners, or boards of examiners, including or not written examinations and practical work. The recognition by peers may be particularly appropriate for the type of skills (e. g. behavioural skills) which are more valued by employers to-day.

This preliminary review shows a variety of responses to the various problems occurring in the choice of a system of assessment and certification. It raises the issue of coherence between the different aspects and with the overall system of and training on the one hand and with the labour market on the other. This can now be illustrated by three concrete examples.

2. THREE WESTERN EUROPEAN APPROACHES

Three European countries are representative of the most typical approaches of assessment and certification: France, Germany and England. But their actual situation has evolved and is not always to-day true to the original model, which illustrates some of the problems which each of these models may arise.

2.1 Predominance of State certification in a school-based system

The French approach is traditionally based on the following principles:

❑ vocational training is essentially school-based, being part of the overall system of education. The curriculum includes a good deal of general education.
❑ it leads to State degrees and diplomas, since there is a tradition of State monopoly in this respect
❑ extensive consultations take place with employers' representatives and trade unions on training requirements and objectives, but the final decision and the development of curricula are the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Education
❑ employers are also represented in boards of examiners for the examinations
❑ collective agreements are increasingly referring to diplomas for workers' classification and wages' determination. But as a matter of principle employers free to assess the qualification of their employees. The training systems and the labour market remain

separate: certification of a qualification by the former does not necessarily imply its recognition (portability) by the second. A number of employers are critical of the academic character of the training provided, which would not correspond to their needs, but this is a very controversial issue and opinions differ in accordance with the size of the company and the sector of activity.

The initial model has been affected by the following trends:

❑ government policies have attempted – and succeeded to some extent to give a new impetus to apprenticeship and to develop alternate training with some work experience
❑ training objectives, which used to be stated in terms of knowledge and know-how, are now referring to the type of competence to be achieved and to the ability to perform a job, but these are identified in rather broad terms
❑ a more modular and continuous system of assessment is being introduced
❑ a growing concern for the assessment and certification of adults' qualifications has led to the establishment of assessment units, with a view to evaluate their competences and to enhance their value on the labour market. They can also obtain the equivalence of a school diploma in order to have access to further studies.
❑ employers' organizations, in agreement with trade unions, are now allowed to define specific vocational diplomas at the branch level. This is a breach to the principle of the State monopoly, but the development has been limited up to now. National diplomas keep a considerable amount of social prestige, although they no more guarantee the type of job expected by diploma-holders.
❑ a recent report has suggested more flexibility and a wider opening of vocational training, especially for adults and has recommended to set up a comprehensive system of definitions of competences.

2.2 The predominant role of social partners in assessment and certification of a dual training system

Germany has also a highly structured systems of vocational training, in which the central role is played by the dual apprenticeship training, with the following characteristics:

❑ apprenticeship concerns a majority of young people. Most of the training is provided by enterprises, which determine the number of apprentices to be trained. The educational component provided by the schools is limited and less important.
❑ the training objectives, contents and organization, as well as assessment procedures are determined by a consensus between social partners, State (Länder) and federal authorities
❑ apprenticeship is traditionally preparing for specific occupations, especially (but not only) skilled industrial workers
❑ at the completion of their training period, trainees receive certificates from the school,

the enterprise and the Chambers. The latter is the most important one, has considerable social value and a high degree of portability on the labour market: in view of the major role of enterprises in the training process, they necessarily recognize its value and its relevance to their needs.

Although this system is still highly appreciated, a few problems have emerged recently and it has been affected by the following trends:

☐ as a result of the complete separation with the educational system, the certificate obtained at the end of apprenticeship does not give access to higher education, which is seen a problem. Similarly, it is felt that something should be done to meet the specific needs of the adult population
☐ there has been a tendency to broaden the contents of training and to make it more flexible, but its relevance to the new requirements of the labour market is sometimes questioned (see below)
☐ the dominant role of the dual system is now challenged by some employers (who feel that training is too costly) and by a number of students (who tend to study for a longer period and at a higher level)

2.3 The competency-based approach of assessment

England has initiated in the 80s a new approach of assessment of vocational qualifications which ha been followed – with some differences – by several English-speaking countries and which has attracted a considerable amount of interest in many others. It therefore deserves particular attention.

At that time, there was no national system of education, training and certification in England. Vocational certificates were granted by a variety of independent bodies and there was a need for clarification and transparency. The level of qualification of the workforce was comparatively low and the training that it had received was criticized for not corresponding to the requirements if industry.

A new system: the "National Vocational Qualifications" (NVQs) was designed with a view to:

☐ bring more transparency and simplicity
☐ promote a better adjustment of training programmes to the requirements of industry
☐ provide more flexible forms of assessment, which would become accessible to a wider public
☐ facilitate a raising of the skill level of the workforce, especially among adult workers

A new emphasis is put on the outcome of training, instead of the inputs (type and length of training, curricula, teachers). The results to be achieved are specified details, so that everyone can understand the results to be achieved and the object of assessment.

A number of specialized bodies have been established in the various sectors activity with a major role assigned to employers. They were asked to define skill standards and performance criteria to be achieved for different types of job. The standards are then translated into units of competency, in coordination with the bodies which have received accreditation for assessment. The units are approved by a National Council of Vocational Qualifications.

Training institutions (especially the Colleges of further education) determine themselves the contents of training which they consider appropriate to reach the level of competency required by the standards. It is assumed that using the standards will be sufficient to guarantee the quality of training programmes. State funding of these programmes is subject to the use of competency standards.

The structure of the system is modular and learners are free to organize their training by assembling modules in the way they want. Performance criteria are very detailed. But there is no reference to the level of knowledge of the learner. In other words, he/she only has to demonstrate his/her ability to perform a task or a set of tasks. There is no written examination.

NVQs do not refer to occupational classifications or salary levels. Since labour markets are increasingly de-regulated, in any case classifications tend to loose weight.

NVQs have been designed primarily for adults. But they have been introduced also as the objective to be achieved at the completion of one of the streams of initial (vocational) education. At a later stage, "General National Vocational Qualifications" (GNVQs) were designed primarily for the initial education of young people and now represent a second stream. Competencies are conceived in a broader way and do not refer to specific tasks but to a wider range of activities. They refer to basic technical knowledge and to types of behaviour required in the world of work, which are often common to various occupational areas and are identified as core skills.

GNVQs do not necessarily imply any work experience in enterprise. The preparation of GNVQs and NVQs vocational streams in initial education is based on modules and does not necessarily require general education subjects.

There has been a lot of controversies about NVQs and in other countries (e. g. Australia) which have followed a similar approach. Since this is a new development which attracts a lot of interest in other countries, it is interesting to take them into consideration. The most critical comments have been expressed by researches and specialists in education. They refer either to the basic concepts and assumption, or to the implementation.

First of all, some of them question the underlying concepts of functional sociology and behaviorist psychology; they doubt whether the addition of fragmented competencies is sufficient to make an educational process; they observe that the assessment concerns the result of an action, but not the ability to act and the cognitive of a skilled job. Standards refer to a single way of acting, which would leave no room for alternative ways and improvisation.

Several studies suggest that standards were – at least initially – defined at a low level by lead bodies: employers' representatives often tend to privilege narrow skills and short-term and informal training programmes.

There were also questions about assessment, which cannot be performed out of context and requires very specific recommendations. Since financing is based on success at the assessment of NVQs/GNVQs, those who are in charge may be biased.

Finally, there is the question of whether such a centralized and rather rigid system of assessment is consistent with a policy of de-regulation and flexibility of the labour market.

Several evaluations of the programme have been undertaken. According to the most important one, a majority of employers are satisfied with the results in terms of performances and motivations. But some problems remain: it may be necessary to have a broader approach of the training requirements and nit to limit them to immediate needs of a particular job; it now appears that the acquisition of knowledge and understanding is necessary. More emphasis is now put on quality.

It would seem that the final success of the programme depends primarily on the employers' attitude: do they see the usefulness of promoting higher qualifications of their workforce leading to NVQs? What is their assessment of the corresponding costs and benefits?

3. ISSUES RAISED BY THE TRANSITION PERIOD CENTRAL EUROPE

From the point of view of vocational qualifications, the former socialist system could be analyzed as follows:

- ☐ Skilled workers were trained in vocational schools, many of them related to industrial companies which provided opportunities for practical training. There was a high degree of specialization and the general education component was limited.
- ☐ There was a strong central control on the inputs (curricula, textbooks, finance, enrolment), but not on the output. Diplomas were essentially school leaving

certificates, which had no value for further studies, universities organizing their own entrance examinations.

☐ This system was consistent with a rather authoritarian allocation of diploma-holders to specific enterprises and to a low level of workers' mobility. According to some analysts, most enterprises were less concerned with the quality of training than with the availability of young workers in a context of labour shortage.

☐ Higher value was attached by the society and the enterprises to the technical jobs and functions. There was a high degree of division of labour and not much modernization of the economy and of work organization.

As a whole, the conservatism of the economy and of the training system could go together, but did not prepare for an abrupt opening to a market economy.

For the VET systems, the transition period has generally meant a decrease of the proportion of young people in the lower vocational stream and an increase of enrolment in secondary vocational or technical schools, less specialization, some degree of decentralization and the development of private vocational schools.

In several countries, decentralization has implied some degree of autonomy left to training institutions, which can adapt to some extent the national curricula, or experiment with new ones. In view of this diversity, it becomes necessary to establish national standards, while leaving some initiatives to the schools. Flexibility and adjustment to local requirements are also necessary to face the increasing diversity of the economy.

Although vocational education is usually not a priority, modernization programmes undertaken with foreign assistance have attempted to reform the training contents. This necessarily led to the issue of assessment and of quality standards. Even more so in view of the facts that the quality of general education in Central Europe and the prestige of teachers were traditionally high. In this context, the main problem is to determine the criteria to which quality and assessment standards should refer.

At the same time, most Central European countries would like to join the European Union and believe that their workforce's skills are not adapted to the new competitive environment. They feel that they need to adapt to European standards and requirements.

The "Tempus" programme of the European Union may have contributed to this situation, by facilitating exchanges with Western European countries and making Eastern more aware of Western standards in training in training contents and methods. In this context, there was a tendency to believe that the solution was to adopt Western European standards, which would provide national standards, while facilitating integration within the European Union and workers' mobility with Western countries.

As long as this integration is not realized, workers' mobility, especially for the skilled ones, would not be a realistic expectation. Once it is achieved, it becomes a possibility, at least in theory, but it will remain difficult in view of the high level of unemployment in almost all Western countries.

But the truth is that there is not such a thing as European standards. Attempts to reach common definitions within the Union have generally failed, in view if the differences between national context, illustrated by the above description of the main "models".

The main achievement has been the adoption of guiding principles for the mutual recognition of higher education degrees and post - secondary diplomas , to the extent that they give access to "regulated" occupations. At the same time, European programmes have attempted to facilitate exchanges and the continuation of studies between institutions, but they are essentially universities reaching bilateral agreements.

Central European countries are now more aware of this context. Some of them have started to define occupational profiles, using the definitions adopted by CEDEFOP in the framework of the Comparability of qualifications exercise. The Eastern Länder of Germany have adopted the dual system of apprenticeship prevailing in Western Germany, bit did not get the same support from the enterprises, in view of the economic context.

Slovenia has created a National Council with representatives from the social partners and from the schools and has set up a network of pilot schools in charge of experimentation with new curricula. There is more concern for the certification of adults and certificates will be established with a more flexible approach of assessment, based on modularity, but it is not intended to follow the British system of competency-based standards.
The opposite situation seems to prevail in Rumania, where a Council of Occupational Standards and Assessment has been established. It has been assigned a rather ambitious goal: the definition of standards which could be used at the same time for all types of vocational education and training, but also as a basis for occupational standards and the assessment of the workforce.

Hungary is following an intermediate, rather pragmatic approach. With the creation of a National Council of vocational education and the establishment of Chambers of Commerce, an important role is devoted to social partners and the training system should rely more on enterprises, following to some extent the German model. At the same time, it is expected to develop standards based on competence, which would borrow some of the features of the British approach, but not all (written examinations would be maintained).

4. CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE VARIOUS APPROACHES

After having reviewed the experience of the industrialised countries and the problems that have arisen other countries, it is now necessary to attempt an evaluation of assessment and certification methods, and too see to what degree they are applicable in various contexts. But before moving on to a comparative evaluation, two questions deserve attention:

☐ how do qualification requirements differ according to labour market; how are they evolving; and how are they evolving; and how are they understood in terms of training objectives which are themselves subject to evaluation?

☐ what are the institutional problems raised by the implementation of a system of assessment and certification, and what is the role of the various "actors" in such a system?

4.1 Labour market demand, its evolution and meaning in various contexts

The assessment and certification of occupational qualifications and competence must relate to the objectives set for the training process. These objectives are supposed to meet the labour market requirements not only in the present, but also in the medium term. This presupposes knowledge or assumptions of the structures and content of work, and how they are likely to evolve, but also how these data are to be interpreted and translated in terms of knowledge, expertise, competence and/or behaviour to be developed.

In other words, assessment must take into account diverse and changing realities; and the methods used must be sufficiently adapted to the circumstances prevailing in the various contexts. No universal solution exists, and an initial distinction must be made between the labour market in advanced industrial countries and other countries.

a) Recent trends in advanced industrial countries

In advanced industrial countries, recent trends are the result of a conjunction of a massive use of information technology, and international competitive pressures driving innovation, new product development, quality and service enhancements, lower costs, and constant restructuring. It is generally admitted these trends have several effects:

☐ a greater instability in job positions and a less certain link between a given position and an employee's qualifications

☐ a need for a periodical upgrading of knowledge and expertise; the qualifications obtained in initial training are not sufficient to lay the groundwork for professional growth throughout one's entire working life

☐ demands for higher training levels, which must especially allow a more profound understanding of the work environment and a greater degree of flexibility

☐ a new insistence on overall competence which is not just technical: interpersonal and communication skills, a talent for teamwork, problem-solving ability, autonomy, etc.

These trends correspond to a new equilibrium between quality, new product development and productivity on the one hand, and labour qualifications on the other. The quest for a new equilibrium is one of the prime objectives in implementing a new assessment and certification system. It is very likely that high-performing businesses involved in this kind of endeavour are motivated so as to have a qualified workforce.

However, if a general consensus exists on the significance of these trends in terms of labour requirements, their interpretation in terms of the kind of expertise that needs developing and the training objectives involved is somewhat open to debate.

According to one interpretation, rapid change in technology, products and the way work is organised; expectations in terms of mobility, versatility and group work; and the increasing role of technicians raise doubts about the traditional dichotomy between skilled and unskilled occupations, and even between blue collar and white collar workers. In this case, one wonders if the overall assessment of training leading to skilled jobs remains justified. Taking a contrary approach, B. Lutz presented a heartfelt plea in favour of rediscovering the notion of "professionalism." In his view, if the type of work has changed, and if skilled work is no longer understood only in terms of technical knowledge, all the same, professionalism remains an essential factor in any active competitive strategy. Alternate training is still the system which is best adapted to this profile, on condition that it strives to maintain a smoothly functioning professional labour market. However, we have seen this threatened today, even in countries like Germany where it has traditionally enjoyed a dominant position (OECDE, 1994 a).

According to recent observations in France, three profiles of qualified workers can be distinguished within the modern economy: those who have acquired sufficient theoretical knowledge through their training to master new technologies; those who have acquired multi-faceted skills on-the-job, which allow them too operate smoothly within a team; and those who above all need craft-like skills (Tanguy, 1992).

There is every likelihood that each of these profiles corresponds to different kinds of learning and accreditation. In the first case, the accent would be placed on theoretical knowledge; in the second, on adaptability and social skills; in the third, on the learning of more traditional skills.

Another element of debate concerns the difference between training for employment and training for "employability", which are both aligned to the characteristics of the job market; with the professional market counting strongest, both domestically and abroad. To each kind of job market corresponds a method of training and assessment.

b) Central and eastern European countries

The economic crisis and privatisation have caused a profound transformation of the job market in these countries. As to their attitude towards work and training, during the present stage of transition, it is possible to discern four kinds of firms:

❑ large manufacturing concerns of a traditional nature which were confronted with a dramatic economic situation since their established production methods (based on a rigidly organised workforce and obsolete technology) no longer met the needs of the global marketplace. Most of them have stopped hiring, and are obliged to terminate their training activities.

- small new businesses who manage their labour force informally and without strict guidelines. Qualifications and hiring policy are vaguely defined, and are more concerned with general education than specialised professional training.
- craft workshops, which are often the only ones to take on apprentices, but whose main concern perhaps is having a cheap workforce
- large foreign companies, who unlike the former have precise demands concerning qualifications; however, these are usually inspired by foreign models, which are closer to those of highly industrialised countries. All the same, it is evident that in many cases, only production-line activities are carried out in the country concerned, so that advanced and specific skills remain abroad. Even so, these businesses are the ones that invest most heavily in training their workforce, but they are somewhat concerned about seeing those they have trained leave the company (Caillods et al. 1995; Culpepper, 1996).

The countries of central and eastern Europe are certainly preoccupied with finding a balance involving quality/innovation/qualifications. However, only the future will show how far they succeed in doing so, or how much they should base their competitiveness on the relatively low cost of manpower. In the medium and long term, the demand for certification, and especially the assessment criteria to be used will depend on this.

4.2 Institutional data and the role of the "actors"

Here it is particularly necessary to assess the role of the various "actors" involved in the assessment and certification process, and delineate the geographical area for certification.

4.2.1 THE ROLE OF "ACTORS"

It should first of all be stressed that (contrary to what one would sometimes have a tendency to expect in countries where tradition attaches a large importance to state involvement), qualification is not automatic in a market economy. It results from market forces and the opinions of those concerned. If these "actors" within the labour market see no interest in setting up a system of assessment and certification, it will not develop of itself or have any impact.

This should not lead one to ignore the role of public authorities. According to H. Steedman, "Experience shows that without public involvement, neither individuals nor businesses will take the means necessary to attain a new balance of higher expertise/quality" (OECD, 1996). D. Colardyn on the other hand, in her comparative assessment of industrialised countries, observes a loss of the certification monopoly by Departments of Education. This authority "remains the guarantor of quality, but certification becomes the responsibility of a consortium of partners. This process, which is difficult at first, can then turn out to be of assistance for recognising competency in collective agreements" (Colardyn, 1996). For the same writer, along with education authorities whose contribution is usually concentrated on quality control, other partners (professional associations, business, private training organisations) can make a contribution in terms of adaptability, access to the latest skills, or deeper knowledge of the business.

"That is why, 'mutual validation' is a sort of preamble to the more or less smooth functioning of the training market. [It] consists in a recognition of the reciprocal roles and contributions by the various partners... which supposes easy access to information. For that, it is necessary to establish a principle of regular meetings among everyone involved" (Hall, ibid.).

This analysis leads D. Colardyn to wish that a Commission bringing all partners from the training market together could be established. It should offer the possibility of defining and implementing a strategy linking initial and continuous training, and extending formal training to the informal and commercial sectors.

This would allow continuity, and take into account the interests of the labour market through the presence of community partners (Colardyn, ibid.).

This solution is certainly desirable, but for the countries that are our major concern here, even more than in industrialised countries, the question revolves around representation and the existence even of organisations capable of speaking on behalf of employers and employees. Even the more so, since as we have seen earlier, the interests of each of the partners are not always the same. What can be done to encourage the setting up and reinforcing of structures concerned with social partnership? When these structures are practically absent, this is obviously a painstaking task.

Moreover, it is necessary to avoid the possible risk of an exceedingly narrow and short-term vision of their training needs by some employers. The active involvement of unions, who are more concerned with encouraging the individual upgrading of workers can make an important contribution (as in Germany, for example).
The link between competency-based standards and job classification raises complex problems. It is obvious that unions favour a close link, with repercussions on pay, but for the same reason, employers are against it, in that they wish to keep control over salaries, and seek to remunerate individuals on a one-to-one basis. The wish to combine in one framework a system of competency-based standards and job classification appears to be somewhat utopian, since it does not sufficiently take into account wider repercussions and concerns. The risk is of creating a rigid system which conflicts with employers' wish for flexibility.

Whatever the case, the institutional framework for certification is obliged to take into account
the particularities of the training system, the overall institutional context and the objectives targeted (certification which is a preparation for further studies or entry into the job market, or both). Case studies show that some countries aim at a system which can meet both objectives, while others accept a complete dichotomy. This is a difficult choice, for it calls into question the very foundations of education and training.

For all countries striving to create or revamp a system of assessment and certification, the following questions need to be addressed:

- ☐ does there exist a system of collective agreements and professional classifications governing payment?
- ☐ what role does this system give to the holding of various kinds of diplomas?
- ☐ to what degree are employers obliged adhere to these guidelines?
- ☐ what are for them the advantages and inconveniences of a certification system, bearing in mind the operating rationale of the job market (the importance of internal, external or professional markets, mobility)? The question is even more relevant if the system in place is founded on self-imposed standards. Do employees find enough direct or indirect advantages (e. g. the guarantee of an efficient qualified workforce? Or compensatory benefits (the possibility of influencing the system in exchange for promoting qualification). Or are they offered inducements (privileged treatment for business who recruit a workforce with recognised qualifications)?
- ☐ finally, one wonders if the choice of an assessment and certification system responding above all to educational or professional aims is simply an organisational choice, or reflects a societal decision, a question which will be treated more fully below

4.2.2. THE GEOGRAPHICAL ASPECT OF CERTIFICATION

The customary framework of certification is a national one. One wonders about the usefulness of certification at the regional and enterprise level. On one hand, one could argue that very few skills are specific to any region, and that there is thus a risk of limiting the mobility of the workforce. On the other hand, this could be a means of being more attentive to business expectations. Concerning this, the French experience with local supplementary training initiatives seems positive.

Looking forward to the future, the question can be raised as to whether the problem of assessment and certification is not destined to abandon the strict limits of national boundaries. The example of the creation of the European Union has often been cited, and one need not evoke it again in this study. However, one can try to imagine the results of the concurrence of three major trends which are currently operative in three areas:

- ☐ on the technological level: new information and communications media
- ☐ on the economic level: globalization
- ☐ on the educational level: life-long learning

By opening infinite possibilities for accessing information, Internet has considerably enlarged the perspectives of distance learning, and can in the long run become a serious competitor for established training institutions. Competency-based standards which call for freedom from institutional training framework (place and length of studies) can find new arguments in this fact.

At the same time, this evolution can also contribute to weakening national boundaries. The main obstacle encountered by attempts to find a common definition of diploma equivalence in Europe comes from the particularity of the national education systems that a person has to go through in order to obtain one. However, from the moment that the means of gaining knowledge widens infinitely and frees itself from national institutions, the importance of the latter is likely to decline.

One wonders if these technological breakthroughs, combined with economic pressures towards globalization will not end by raising serious doubts about national qualification and certification systems altogether.

We can compare possible trends towards globalization of qualifications and training with those that are already operating in the economy, and quote A. Vinokur, who believes that "the normalisation of the training product can allow the implementation of Taylor-like procedures rationalising knowledge, which is in any case a necessary step for the individualisation of education and the opening of opportunity sufficiently large for the information industries in this sector". (Vinokur, 1995). The same author quotes an article from the Harvard Business Review, according to which "Industries which have a teaching component... will obviously prefer not to teach in school environment. [They] will be tempted to sell education - courses, exams, 'certificates of mastery' validated by the schools and employers - directly to employers" (ibid.).

4.3 A preliminary assessment: the pertinence and feasibility of the various approaches

The close consideration of the above analyses should allow the drawing up of a comparative evaluation of advantages, limits and problems accruing to the implementation of three kinds of approaches. Discussion will focus particularly on the model for competency-based standards initially tested in England, since many countries still see in it an overall response to the problems that assessment and certification present.

4.3.1 COMPETENCY-BASED STANDARDS

The attractiveness of this approach is especially linked to two reasons:

- ☐ on one hand, the educational systems in these countries are often academic in the traditional sense, and cut off from the realities of working life – in the case of eastern Europe, this means cut off from the new realities of a market economy. The approach founded on competency-based standards is supposed to answer these needs in the most direct and concrete way.
- ☐ on the other hand, this approach claims to be the most simple and transparent. Countries seeking to set up a new system are offered a complete, and in some sense a "turnkey" solution.

The transplantation of this model raises at least four questions: Are its principles sound? Does it best respond to the needs of the labour market? How does it fit into the education system? Under what conditions can it be set up in the various contexts?

a) We mentioned in the first part, the reservations this procedure gave rise to in England: standards that were fragmentary, restrictive and often too low; an insufficient awareness of educational concerns; difficulties and lack of objectivity in the assessment process. These criticisms apply mainly to the methods adopted in England. They are less relevant to the way the model was applied in Australia and New Zealand.

As for the concept, itself, one is tempted to quote the reservations of those who take a critical view of a behaviourist approach which seeks to scientifically determine in purely technical terms all the elements of qualification (Alaluf and Stoobants, 1994), or who feel that competence cannot be isolated in the abstract, but must take into account the whole individual (Fragnière, in OECD 1996 a).

One could also mention an Australian university professor, according to whom the entire procedure smacks of ideological inspiration. For her, the version imported to Australia is "clearly Thatcherite in its origins and approach," even though this import is being applied by a labour government. "The ideological appropriation of the overall reform process replaces public aims and the social vision of educational institutions by a logic aimed at the private creation of wealth. The result of this is major shift in the location and way that these institutions are controlled and managed, and by whom". (Jackson, in Collins, 1993).

This viewpoint shares similarities with the analysis of A. Vinokur, already mentioned, concerning globalization. She considers that "control by competency-based standards eliminates 'useless' knowledge from the point of view of the seeker, and imposes content on teachers". She sees a new control mechanism developing downstream in the education system, which marks the end of its autonomy, and is characterised by the separation of production and the certification of knowledge. The producers of education services tend to be placed in a competitive situation for the provision of expertise at the lowest cost. The reference model now becomes industrial certification (Vinokur, 1995).

b) Links with the educational system

However, one remarks that this kind of interpretation arises in a situation where the overall education system is inspired by an approach based on competency-based standards. Everything in fact depends on the way this approach is fitted into the education and training system. The objectives concerning pedagogical methods, and especially the fact that the accumulation of fragmentary skills does not necessarily constitute overall training have much greater weight:

☐ if the approach is applied to basic education and not only complementary professional training
☐ if it is implemented at the secondary school level, when young people have not yet acquired a sufficient basis in general education, rather than the post-secondary level, when this basis is supposedly acquired (as in Australia, for example)
☐ if the training is uniquely made up of specific professional skills, rather than coming in parallel, or as a complement to broader training: the first case is that of the NVQ network for basic education in Great Britain, as opposed to the GNVQ network.

On the contrary, an approach based on competency-based standards is likely to raise fewer objections:

☐ if it refers to professional training as a complement or in parallel to a solid general or technological training
☐ if it is limited to a parcelling out of specific skills
☐ if it does not have an over exclusive and systematic nature, which would make it possible to combine an assessment of competence with more general kinds of training, aimed at a wider understanding of the technological, organisational and socioeconomic environment
☐ if it is addressed primarily to adults

c) Meeting the demands of the labour market

Concerning the response to the evolution of work and qualifications, changes which have just been mentioned can be interpreted in various ways. Thus, the fact of overemphasising the traditional dichotomy between occupations, and on the necessity of adaption with mobility in mind can also lead one to:

☐ either, insist on the need for a sufficiently broad basic training, meaning that a large part of assessment and certification concerns basic knowledge and overall learning
☐ or, on the contrary, to recommend a modular approach in the British sense, concentrating on assessing only those skills which are necessary at a given moment in one´s professional growth.

As well, the emphasis on competency does not necessarily lead to an assessment of proficiency in the sense of NVQs. If we bear in mind the definition of G. Le Boterf, who sees in competency the "actualisation of what one knows in a special context (marked by working relations, administrative culture, fluctuations, time constraints, resources)" (G. Le Boterf, 1994), in this case, evaluation can only with difficulty be restricted to the checking of strict pre-established standards, and implies the taking into account of the context according to changing circumstances.

It rather deals with a carefully overall evaluation within the context of periodic training, which was already indicated in an OECD symposium on the evaluation of "non-objective knowledge" (OECD, 1994).

Contrasting a global model with a modularised model for certification, M. Durand-Drouhin definitively asserts that "the choice between one or the other ways of reasoning depends a lot on how the work is organised. If on labour market exists which is organised into professions which can be qualified by 'global' diplomas, what is the solution? The alternative does not necessarily consist in modularising professional training and certification, but in providing general education. If it is possible to identify coherent areas of qualifications and specific skills, one can at least define coherent groups of basic qualifications and skills." (Durand-Drouhin, 1995).

d) Feasibility

The questions of feasibility arise more urgently for central and eastern European countries. The following questions can be raised:

☐ First of all, one must not underestimate the considerable investment required for reassessment of skills and a definition of competency-based standards. What are the means that the countries concerned possess to successfully carry out an operation which mobilised considerable resources in the United Kingdom for several years, and then to periodically update the data gathered?

If these means do not exist, the easy solution consists in purely and simply adopting competency-based standards developed abroad. But this raises the pertinent question, noted earlier, concerning the conformity of the labour market to local conditions.

Generally speaking, there is no way of avoiding the question of how to formulate a description of competency which can be applied universally. European attempts to establish qualification equivalence has already run into difficulty, even for neighbouring countries (Bertrand, in OECD 1996 a). Would it not be even more difficult to compare socio-economic systems that are fundamentally different? At the most, would it not be best to use foreign models to provide an initial point of reference that would need later validation at the national level at some cost.

☐ Supposing that a national enquiry is planned, what criteria will be used? We saw earlier that the actual state of the economy and the way work is organised do not necessarily correspond to wished for training. Will training for future development be founded on outmoded kills?

Can employers and their representatives be expected to predict future developments? Experience shows that one can expect the most visionary among them to be sensitive to future trends, but it appears difficult to draw up in detail and in concrete terms the skills which are not even yet visible on the horizon.

- The most natural approach for analysing skills consists in taking a sectorial approach. But one must not forget that an important part of them are inter-sectorial.
- The implementation of procedures based on competency-based standards will raise far more acute problems if they are applied to specific work environments: surgery and hair-dressing are more difficult to evaluate than psychiatry and child care. Let us just add that determining competency-based standards is easier in an industrial Taylor-style environment, and more difficult in activities involving the service sector, which are more difficult to observe and less precise. The question could be also raised concerning craft-like activities.
- Thus, the necessary investment in order to identify competence and assessment standards is especially important if the intention is to set up an exhaustive system, covering all areas at all levels. It could be much more limited if research is undertaken in sharply defined areas and at restricted levels. In any case, it would seem essential to begin with an experimental phase before applying it generally.

How would the assessment be implemented? The most logical procedure would be to widen the possibilities for training while at the same time distinguishing them from the training itself. However, if too much freedom is given to providers and particularly businesses, the objectivity of the assessment and the level of quality risks being compromised. It is however clear that this type of problem also applies to other kinds of approaches.

These reservations and queries must not bring doubt the interest of an assessment concentrating more on training objectives and results, as opposed to traditional approaches based uniquely on the means and on the transmission of knowledge.

4.3.2 THE TRADITIONAL MODEL OF STATE DIPLOMAS

An appraisal of the two other approaches can be resumed far more rapidly.

Concerning the approach based on a state monopoly in dispensing diplomas which sanctions training a predominantly academic nature, one that is widely followed in France:

- In principle, it provides advantages concerning the uniformity of evaluation, the social recognition of degrees at the national level, and the transfer of qualifications in order to attain a higher level of learning. It tends of favour an overall educational approach for the individual.
- On the other hand, it runs the risk of having an academic character, and not to sufficiently bear in mind labour market demands, if employers are not sufficiently

implicated in the definition of aims in the assessment. Above all, employers are unlikely to recognise the value of diploma on the labour market.

We have seen that in the case of France, a certain change has taken place which is moving it away from the initial model, incorporating other models which make the overall picture less easy to distinguish. Co-operation among employers, the definition of training objectives based on wide, professional systems of reference, and a certain modularity have allowed the inconveniences which have just been already mentioned to be partially remedied.

One could even maintain that, contrary to widespread opinion, it is possible that, in some cases at least, training planners are better placed to foresee future labour market development than employers. This is how some professional diplomas in France were conceived, with the intention not only of anticipating future technological development, but also to make of the new diploma "a catalyst in the transformation of work. Work was in some ways called on to adjust to the change in professional training, which it did only partially" (Verdier, 1995)

In this case, however, even if the role of training planners is predominant, co-operation with employers remains essential for them to be sensitive to the perspectives of the evolving labour market. And it was not sufficient to guarantee the recognition (equivalence) of diplomas.

However, cases exist where a separate training system has been set up intended for the private sector, with specific certificates. In this case, there is a risk of excessive compartmentalisation, with qualification awarded by the educational system, or even by different professional training system. It is far from certain that the existence of a distinct system of certification awarded by various departments recognition of the certificates.

All the same, it is evidently more difficult to meet the specific needs of the traditional and "informal" sectors with a tradition of state diplomas sanctioning academic training than according to other methods.

4.3.3 ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION SANCTIONING A DUAL – TYPE TRAINING

The advantages and inconveniences of dual training appear in inverse proportion to the preceding model: a solid of recognition (equivalence) on the job market goes without saying; however, a problem arises when certification based on job-acquired skills is required for a continuation of studies. In this principle, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, especially in the pedagogical sense, which justifies the interest that many countries show in the German experience. Arguments in its favour can also be found both in advanced industrial economies which emphasise relational talents and integration in the corporation, and equally with less developed economies, and with qualifications related to arts and crafts.

The problem that arises concerns the conditions of applicability and transferability of the model within the various context. We have noted that if the principle was not being currently challenged in the country of origin, it was starting to lose ground; and the conditions for its success were not well-positioned today (erosion of the professional labour market, competition from extended education programs).

It is essential to emphasise here that the problem raised by the burden and slowness of the co-operative process among social partners, although it has been resolved smoothly in the highly favourable German context, runs the risk of creating a quagmire in other less favourable contexts.

According to Boehm (in Husen, Postlethwaite, 1994), one rarely finds the specific conditions present in Germany in developing countries: i. e. an extended learning period before specialised training, a strong commitment from business whose economic situation is sufficiently solid to allow to underwrite the cost of training, and a restrictive policy concerning professional full-time training. He regrets that the German experts have a tendency to consider that the system can only operate at an advanced stage of industrialisation, and do not try harder to adapt it to other contexts.

The question of whether the dual training system should necessarily be associated with a global assessment of a specific occupation would deserve further discussion. There has been some relaxing of this relationship in Germany. In a different context, it should be possible to move further away from the original model. But in any case the dual training system is more consistent with an overall assessment of an occupation than with a modular approach of fragmented skills.

Boehm also remarks that once a public vocational training is implemented, employers do not see why they should invest in training. They are satisfied with criticising the authorities if this training is not of sufficient quality. Moreover, the coordination between Departments of Education (for the academic side of training) and the Departments of Labour (for practical experience) may be harder to achieve of Germany.

Partial transplantation of the model can conserve at least a portion of the advantages of alternate training at the pedagogical level. However if the system is not in full control; and above all, if it does not include the full commitment of employers, one can seriously doubt whether its advantages are maintained as to the value accorded to assessment and certification in the dual German system.

QUALIFICATION STRUCTURE AND QUALITY CONTROL IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Ben HÖVELS

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of quality in vocational education and training (VET) can be regarded from various points of departure. In this paper I take as a starting point the reform of VET - systems that occur - already since the eighties - in many countries.

Reforms of VET systems are mostly launched parallel to and/or as a reaction to big changes in societies. Apart from the transition from stateled economies to market-led economies, which are going now for some years in eastern and central European countries, many societies - also western ones - are finding themselves in a process of transformation. These are mainly the result of three kinds of developments.

- ❑ First of all, there are tendencies of a post-modernistic character (like globalisation, opening of world-wide-markets, new information - and communication technologies, individualisation, etc.). These offer new opportunities as well as big uncertainties and risks, both for society and individual persons. The German sociologist Beck speaks in this respect about the risk society.
- ❑ Secondly, big changes can be observed in the labour market and the occupational system. These lead to a different demand for skills, qualifications, and competencies, upgraded and of a less traditional nature, and even to a demand - as it seems - for different personalities. However, changes in the labour market are far from homogenous; they differ by sector, by size and nature of the firm. At the same time, the educational and training system is therefore confronted with the challenge to be responsive. And - no less important - more and more people are not able (or not willing) to adapt to the new requirements which are put on the educational system. Such is the case for example in the Netherlands where every school leaver now is required to possess a so-called "minimum starting qualification".
- ❑ A third development involves the increasing problems that governments in modern societies have with controlling state-expenditures, mainly due to ageing of the population. In most modern societies ageing will reach a peak in about twenty till thirty years (2015 - 2025). State-expenditures will be under pressure more and more by growing expenses for medical, pension - and welfare - systems, while at the same time educational and training requirements are growing too.

In most societies vocational education and training is assumed to play a major role in responding to these changing qualitative, quantitative and financial requirements. Policy - makers and other actors are looking for a responsive VET - system. Maintaining and upgrading quality of vocational education and training is part of this effort. Quality control in VET is one of the main possibilities for ensuring that the next generation of the workforce is adequately prepared for the national, regional and local labour market demands. Thus, in this paper quality control will be regarded from this point of view.

The issue of quality control in vocational education and training is rather complicated because of at least two reasons.

- First of all quality control in principle can be applied to different segments of the VET – systems, assuming that VET is defined as covering the full range of initial education/training for young people, until education(training for the employed and even the unemployed. I will sketch in the next section an ideal typical model for different segments within the whole VET – system and their interrelationships. The main argument is that the criteria and proceedings for quality control of the initial segment and the other segment will differ.
- Secondly, the meaning and position of quality control is dependent of the content and structure of VET – systems. Therefore I will sketch in section 3 the significance of different institutional backgrounds of quality control by providing a typology for the variety of VET – systems. The main argument here is that quality control should be located at different dimensions, dependent on the type of VET – system.

In section 4, two central dimensions of quality control are distinguished: a) the product(process-dimension and b) the external/internal dimension. In this section I will deal with both dimensions, especially focusing at the role and meaning of a national qualification structure. The main argument is that a national qualification structure is an essential instrument for guaranteeing mobility on internal and external labour markets and for accessibility to higher education and to life long learning.

In section 5, the situation in the Netherlands is presented as an example, with critical points mirrored by developments in some other countries. One major argument for further elaboration is that an adequate qualification structure has to serve at least three functions: transparency, communication, and ownership. A second argument is that a national qualification structure as a framework for external quality control should be accomplished by relatively autonomous educational institutions that are confronted with mechanisms for internal quality control as well.

2. DIFFERENT SEGMENTS WITHIN A VET – SYSTEM: THE FLEXIBILITY-MODEL AS A BASIC CONCEPT

The framework for further development of vocational education and training could be provided by the flexibility-model, in which three segments can be distinguished:

The segment of initial vocation education and training. Main task of this segment is to qualify young people for broad occupational fields with urgent attention key-qualifications and core-qualifications.

- In principle the responsibility and financial burden for this segment lies primarily on the shoulders of the state. In my opinion the state has the sole responsibility for the contents and quality of initial education and training. However, the financial burden for this segment can be shared by firms and/or sectorial associations of employers and workers (unions). They could offer appropriate trainee-places as well as other kinds of support, both financially or by delivering equipment.
  In other words: the contents of the first segment should be steered by common interests, while other relevant actors could participate in institutional and financial arrangements. Perhaps it could be stated that the market and the functioning of market parties could be part of the instrumentarium of the state.

- The second segment is the intermediate segment of training designed to offer branch – or sector-specific qualifications. This are qualifications that are specific for certain branches or economic sectors, as for example the construction industry, the metallurgic industry, etc. These qualifications are broader and more general than purely firm- or job-specific ones, because they are of relevance for the branch as a whole.

  In principle the responsibility for this segment is primarily in the hands of social partners (employer-organisations and unions) at branch level. However, the financial burden and responsibility for this segment could be shared by the state, especially as far as the qualification of unemployed and specific target groups are concerned. In other words: steering contents of qualifications is primarily in the hands of social partners, with possible institutional and financial participation by the state.

- The third segment is primarily directed to needs for qualifications in specific individual firms or jobs. The financial burden and responsibility for this segment lies primarily in the hands of firms themselves. The responsibility could be shared especially in the case of medium and small-sized firms as well as in the case of unequal entry-opportunities for different categories of workers – by employer – organisations and unions at sector or branch level. In other words: steering of qualifications os primarily a responsibility of firms themselves: institutionally and financially there can be participation by others, such as branch organisations. Of course the role of employees themselves in (formal or informal) learning is extremely important.

One can discern a three segment-model with shifting responsibilities of different actors, depending on the function of the segment. Each segment is characterised by a clear primary responsibility for the content and by opportunities and possibilities for institutional/financial involvement by other actors.

Of course, this is an ideal typical model and in applying this model problems could arise. For example, issues such as what exactly has to be regarded as the borders of the various segments, or how each of the segments has to be defined exactly. Another problem may arise with respect to the ratio between general and vocational qualification-elements within each of the segments, or to what extent financing would give the right (or obligation) to determine contents. However, this model can be regarded as a framework, a point of departure, for the development of flexible systems of vocational education/training as well as for distinctive criteria and proceedings for quality control.

In this respect I would like to stress that criteria and proceedings are different for the initial segment and for the other segments. While the initial segment is asking for (product- and for process-) standards which are derived from the need for mobility of the future labour force between branches and individual firms (broad, future-directed qualifications), the other segments are asking for tailor-made (branch or firm-specific) qualifications.

3. DIFFERENT INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUNDS: VARIETY OF VET - SYSTEMS

Regarding the initial segment a distinction is often made between three traditional models of VET - systems, in western societies, dependent of the role of the state:

- ☐ The bureaucratic or school-based model (examples: France and - perhaps - the Netherlands as far as it only pertains to the full based learning route). Central government determines to a large extent what vocational schools have to do, by way of central planning. Firms or branches do not have much influence on the quality and quantity of vocational education. The assumption is that it will be possible to create a responsive system of VET by central planning. Disadvantages are its bureaucratic character and its distance from the labour market.
- ☐ The liberal or Anglo-Saxon model (examples: USA, UK, and perhaps - Japan). Typical for this model is the emphasis in initial education on general education by schools, with some labour market-directed elements. Vocational training itself is in essence a matter for labour market parties; it means that firms are the main qualifiers. Pedagogical support in vocational training seems lacking and the influence of the state on VET is limited. In most cases schools within this model have to operate on a (free) market of firms and of pupils. Disadvantages of this model seem to be its non-transparent qualification-structure as well as its risks for reproducing social inequality.
- ☐ The dual model (examples: Germany, Austria, Denmark). In this model state- and market-parties each by themselves have on own role in VET. As such the model takes a balanced position in between the bureaucratic and the liberal model. In essence within the dual model two institutionally and legally separated subsystems - schools and firms - co-operate closely with each other, at least they should. In their close co-operation schools and firms offer VET - courses, which are recognised by government and social partners (i. e. employers and unions) at central level that means 'nation wide'. As a rule schools offer theoretical aspects and firms offer practical aspects. Disadvantages of the dual model seem the long time it takes to adapt VET - courses to new labour market-demands (that means to agree on common constructs/concepts) and - above all - the supply of trainee places by firms.

The distinction in three models may be helpful for international comparison of different institutional settings. However, in my opinion, it is not completely satisfying for that goal. Firs of all it ignores both the broad variety of cases within each of the models as well as the dynamics in nowadays developments in vocational education and training. Secondly, this distinction along the dimension 'state-market' seems simplifying reality too much, and does not conceptualise sharply enough main features of VET - systems that are of relevance for quality control.

Therefore, I would like to propose a more realistic and - in my point of view - more significant ideal-typology along at least three dimensions. At the same time this ideal-typology is of a more dynamic mature, enabling us to give attention to different directions wherein VET - systems presently develop or could develop. These three dimensions are:

- ☐ The political-organisational framework: the question is who are the pre-dominant actors in having responsibility for qualifying young people (regarding organisation and learning itself, as well as regarding financing, co-ordination, controlling, etc.).
- ☐ The didactical-curricular direction. The question is which is the substantial frame of reference for targets and contents of qualifying young people (regarding didactical and methodical principles of the learning process; what and how to learn as a preparation for the labour market; how qualification profiles of education and training correspond with demand-profiles of the labour market etc.).
- ☐ The positioning/the phase of the transition stage from school to work: the question is in which stage young people are entering the world of labour (directly after general education at schools; directly after labour-oriented courses at school; after general education at schools but only as a trainee etc.).

My assumption is that these three dimensions are extremely relevant also for the issue of quality control.

By combining the 'scores' of various VET - systems along these three dimensions the Deißinger (o. c.) Has developed the concept of qualifying styles as the main characteristic of a national VET - system. Despite the fact that in reality 'scoring' on the different dimensions will not be fully independent of each other, it is interesting to take into account the possible combinations of 'scores' on each of the three dimensions as presented in the diagram below.

'Qualifying styles': combining scores´ on dimensions

Dimension 1 pre-dominant actors:	Dimension 2 frame of reference:	Dimension 3 positioning/phase:
a) labour market parties b) state c) more actors (cooperating or competing)	a) function/firm b) discipline/science c) occupation	a) directly after general education b) after labour market oriented school c) after general education

		school parallel apprenticeship in firms

The VET - systems of UK, France and Germany, could be characterised se respectively 'qualifying style' ´1a, 2a, 3b´ (UK), ´1a, 2b, 3b´ (France), ´1c, 2c, 3c´ (Germany). However, in all these three countries - taken as examples - big tension exist within and between the three dimensions, and indeed their VET - systems are developing rapidly. The tensions are becoming more and more manifest in political and scientific discussions about the VET - system. These discussions are initiated by importatnt transformation processes in modern societies as I mentioned in the introduction.
In the Netherlands the dominant style has traditionally been ´1b, 2b, 3b´(like France), however with a parallel - but much less important - dual-system for lower levels in style 1c, 2a/c, 3c. However, at this very moment developments in the Netherlands are oriented towards.

☐ more integration of both parallel (sub)systems in one overall system with flexible pathways in and between both subsystems
☐ 1c (both at national and local level), a mixture of 2c (at national level) and 2a (at local level), 3c (with elements of 3b, dependent of categories of young people)

As the Dutch case shows it might be useful to add to 'qualifying style' as a concept, the relationship within a certain VET - system between national standards and autonomy at the local level. This could perhaps also clarify possible discrepancies within policy-models applied in certain countries, including tensions between what is in favour at political (macro-) level and what is really happening at operational (micro-) level.

Regarding the issue of quality control, the various dimensions will allow to locate main points of reference, depending of the VET - model as well as - most important - (policy-strivings for) changes in the system. Some VET - models will ask for proceedings which focus only on quality of education in schools, while others will focus only on quality of education/training in firms and/or on quality in the relationship between school-and firm-training. Some VET - model will traditionally ask for criteria that are derived from a disciplinary frame of reference, while others will ask for an occupational frame of reference, etc.

However, the most important aspect in this context, are the demands of a responsive VET - system vi-_-vis the transformation processes that are occurring nowadays in modern societies. First of all these seem to ask for new kinds of relationships between pre-dominant actors involved in VET, for example between state and market, between the national and the local level. Secondly, these seem to ask for new patterns along various VET - segments, while stressing more and more the relevance of national standards for the initial segment.

4. QUALITY: THE ROLE OF A NATIONAL QUALIFICATION STRUCTURE

The issue of quality control in vocational education and training can be regarded from various poinst of view. At least two central dimensions of quality control can be distinguished: a) the product-process-dimension and b) the external-internal dimension (a. o. Visser, 1992). The product-process dimension refers to the distinction between the output or product of educational and training processes, on the one hand, and the quality of educational and training processes, on the other. The external-internal dimension refers to internal control within educational/training institutions on the one hand and external criteria, on the other hand. Here, I like to stress the role of a national qualification structure as an instrument to guarantee mobility on internal and external labour markets and access to higher education.
First of all, it can be observed that more and more western countries already have, or are striving for national qualification structure, offering nation-wide standards for external quality control. Examples are Germany (recognised/ 'anerkannte' 'Ausbildungsberufe') the UK (National Vocational Qualifications), and the Netherlands (national qualification structure for VET). The need for coherent national standards seems to be clear in many western countries. A national qualification structure is perceived more and more as an essential instrument or frame of reference in a responsive VET - system.

However, the basis of the various structures strongly varies. In some countries (e. g. the UK) national standards are fully competence-based, focusing purely on product criteria in terms of (perceivable) performance and behaviour.

Keen (1993, derived from Nijhof of Streumer): '(...) The government has felt that the role of the state should be confined to the provision of education, with interventions in the training market limited to supporting disadvantaged groups (...), the provision of pump-priming money for development purposes, and exhortation. Second, the government believes that vocational education and training provision should be employer-led and employer controlled. The influence of educationalists and trade unions on training should be diminished. '

The proliferation of qualifications which has resulted historically from such a non-state-run-system is now more and more seen as a negative feature, inhibiting clear pathways through the system and hence entry/re-entry in to it, and individuals progression to their highest possible level. Above all the NVQ - system emphasises practical capability at the expense of the understanding of underlying principles and knowledge. That is the main reason why some years ago a parallel-structure (that means: not integrated) has been developed: General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ´s)

In other countries (e. g. Germany) national standards are fully based on both product- and process-criteria. Product criteria are derived from standardising qualification profiles by so-called recognised training-occupations. Process-criteria are laid down by law and by 'Ausbildungsordnungen', where it is arranged also how by training to arrive at the 'product' (duration of courses, contents of courses, demands for examinations, etc.). Above all, in Germany, delivery and assessment of qualifications are two aspects of the same system.

Adler and Benner (1994): 'Die Standardisierung von Qualifikationsprofilen durch Ausbildungsberufe und die daran gekoppelte Zertifizierong der Abschlüsse wirkt sich in deppelter Hinsicht aus. Einerseits bedeutet Berufsausbildung in anarkannten Ausbildungsberufen, daâ die faktische Bindung der Arbeitskräfte an den einzelnen (Ausbildungs-) Betrieb reduziert wird, weil die Ausbildung nicht ausschlieâlich an jeweils spezifischen Betriebsinteressen orientiert ist. Anderseits schafft die Standardisierung eine hohe Transparenz für die Betriebe, die dadurch in die Lage versetzt werden, mit groâer Verläâlichkeit ihren Qualifikationsbedarf am Arbeistmarkt zu decken'.

In Germany national standards are formulated in a very intensive deliberations between social partners and state. However, one of the problems regarding the German system is its 'rigidity' as a result of the long time it takes before social partners agree on new qualification profile and 'Ausbildungsordnungen'.
The UK and Germany can be regarded as typical examples of the so-called Anglo-Saxon model respectively the Rheinland-model. In between these two models the Dutch situation could be located, with typical compromises between flexibility and rigidity, between (external) national standards and relatively local autonomy, between product- and process criteria.

5. AN EXAMPLE OF A MIXED MODEL: THE NETHERLANDS

Since the middle of the eighties a re-orientation in Dutch policies towards VET has taken place. Crucial in this re-orientation has been a more demand-led approach with a big emphasis on market-elements. In Dutch policy priority is given to a) an optimal match with developments on the labour market and b) provision of a minimum vocational qualification 'for everyone'.

Following the recommendations of a number of advisory-committees in the last decade, Dutch government has set out the following priorities for its VET-policies (Hövels, 1994):

☐ A restricted role for the government and more involvement of 'social partners' at central and at branch level.
☐ More integration of the school-based track and the dual-based track (apprenticeship) in

one harmonised VET-system: to offer courses and learning routes, depending on the requirements of the labour market as well as on the abilities and willingness of students.

- More autonomy given to relevant actors at local level, educational institutions/schools, and the enhancement of their policy-potentials: to emphasise the responsiveness of educational institutions at local level and their responsibility to find a proper position in the qualification infrastructure.
- A uniform national qualification structure, with global educational targets determined (together by social partners and the educational field) at central level and with space for local actors to fill in. To provide for qualifications with a nation-wide civil value and more transparency in the supply of qualifications and courses and at the same to give space for specifications according to local needs.
- The guarantee of a minimum of practice-learning for all VET-pathways (with a minimum of 20 % for each course): to smooth the transition from school to work and to acquire qualifications and competencies that cannot or difficult be gained at school.

These priorities are regarded in the Netherlands as rather fundamental changes in the VET system. They are laid down also in a new Act on Education and Vocational Training which is gradually implemented since January 1996.

Regarding the issue of quality control two pillars of the new VET building are of central importance: the national qualification structure and big relatively autonomous educational institutions/schools at regional/local level.

The national qualification structure is offering external standards focusing at product/output-criteria. The government has stated that in the initial phase of VET, the keyword for the national qualification structure should be "selective flexibility". Selective flexibility refers to the need for broad, durable and future-oriented qualifications, which have to offer a solid basis for flexibility on the labour market and further learning in later stages of the occupational career. It is up to social partners in sectors to define and describe future-oriented occupational profiles so-called qualification profiles, including educational targets. Those educational profiles have according criteria set by the state – labour market-oriented, socio-cultural-oriented and oriented towards entrance towards higher qualification levels.

Educational/training-programmes of schools have to be almost totally directed to the educational targets set by the qualification structure but 20 % of the curriculum is free to be accommodated to local needs or requirements. Examinations are partly organised externally (by government accredited instances) and partly internally by the school themselves. The national qualification structure is being implemented in schools in the course year 1997 – 1998. The qualification structure will be developed further in the next years and permanently be adapted according new developments in society and on the labour market.

The national qualification structure functions basically as a communication instrument, with three main functions:

- ☐ transparency function, aiming at clarity for all actors involved (firms, students, schools) and at coherency
- ☐ indicator function, aiming at a balanced translation from labour market demands into education/training
- ☐ ownership function, aiming at the 'mental ownership' of VET by all actors involved

Large and relatively autonomous school provide multi-sector vocational courses (both as apprenticeships and school-based) as well as types of adult education. In principle the schools are free in the choice of the didactical-pedagogical shaping of their curricula.

Clearly, the national qualification structure will only make sense if all these functions are realised. This will be one of the big challenges for the next future.

Most of the contents are prescribed at national level. This means also that schools are autonomous in making all kinds of arrangement with other relevant actors such as firms, employment offices, etc. This should offer them opportunities both for responding to local qualification needs as well as for utilising the qualificationing and learning potential that other actors could afford, e.g. by developing effective networks with other important actors at local level. Above all it guarantees a certain flexibility in the behaviour of schools. However. Their autonomy is restricted by two aspects: a) the framework offered by the national qualification structure, and b) the financing mechanisms of the government (dependent of number of students, numerical effectiveness, etc.).

In the past – and before the bid VET – reform – quality control was determined in a centralistic way by

- ☐ a very detailed regulation (by law and otherwise by the Ministry) regarding the learning process, lesson tables, and other conditions at school
- ☐ detailed regulations regarding content and shaping of (fully centralised) examinations
- ☐ the role of the inspection, a governmental institution that had a controlling task over all school and practice-firms

This kind of quality control over the learning process has drastically changed now. Except for the external examinations and (of course) the national qualification structure other kinds of quality control mechanisms are introduced.

Most important in this respect is the introduction by the new law that all schools have to set up an internal quality control system. However, schools can determine the character of this system themselves. All schools have to present yearly in a public report their "performance"-indicators in terms of effectiveness, etc.

Thus, although the state requires internal quality control in vocational education and training, the nature of an internal quality control system is left up to the schools themselves. However, they are obliged to deliver a "quality report" yearly for the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Summarizing it can be stated that the mixed nature of the Dutch system of quality control appears by a typical combination of central regulation and autonomy of local schools, whereby guaranteeing external quality is dominated by actors at national level (state, social partners and educational representatives) and the responsibility of quality care is mainly up to actors at local level (schools). However, it has to be said that domination does not mean a monopoly: in both cases - external as well as internal quality control - actors at other levels do have their own opportunities to exercise influence also.

The Dutch system as it is sketched above, is a rather young one and its value and effectiveness should be fully approved in the next future. In practice many problems have to be overwon too, and - of course - there will be a permanent struggle between relevant actors on the issue of local autonomy and central regulation. However, in my point of view the concept behind the quality control system does fit at least the typical Dutch context. And, what is perhaps more important, by a national qualification structure it is striving for mobility of future workers at external labour markets.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Looking for responsiveness of VET, a fitting system for quality control is extremely important. In this contribution I have tried to stress that in developing a system of quality control at least two main deliberations should be taken into account.

First of all this is the distinction between different VET-segments; each of them should have their own tasks and responsibilities and in principle for each of them different actors are predominant. In this paper I have focussed at the initial VET-segment. Whereas in other segments tailor-made courses and efficiency may simply be important criteria; the initial segment has a more common interest - and thus more complex - character.
Secondly, it should be noticed that a fitting quality control concept is highly dependent on the societal context, especially the kind of "qualifying style" as I sketched some examples of these in a rather typical way. As a point of departure should one be aware of the main criterium that the initial segment of VET systems should guarantee external mobility. Dependent of the actual or wished qualifying style the system of quality control should take into account at least the three dimensions: a) the political-organisational framework, b) the didactive-curricular direction and c) the positioning of the transition stage from school to work.

Regarding the political-organisational framework, arrangements should be made for involvement of the relevant actors, and in case of developing their role as relevant actors. Despite their differences, in most of the Western European countries representatives of important labourmarket parties (employers and unions) are regarded as such.

Regarding the didactical-curricular direction it should be clear on which principle i.c. in which frame of reference, the content of the curriculum should be shaped, in such a way that a mutual adjustment between labourmarket and VET is saved in the best way.

Despite their different traditions, in this respect in most Western European countries discussions are going on about this topic, while looking for the most significant criterium given both predominant principles of structuring (future) labourmarkets, as well as predominant principles for external mobility and life-long-learning.

Regarding the positioning of the transition stage, it is extremely important to notice that quality criteria (with respect to their learning potentials) should be imposed for trainee places, in case these it selves are regarded as in integral component of the initial VET segment. In most Western European countries where trainee places are at the same time part of the transition phase from school to school, those quality criteria are almost a permanent issue of discussion because of the willingness of firms to offer trainee places.

Lastly, I would like to stress the very crucial point of a fitting arrangement about the relationship between central regulation and local autonomy. In my point of view this arrangement should guarantee both "rigidity" as well as "flexibility", and the way it should be shaped will be dependent on historical-societal preconditions and opportunities. However, opportunities are not merely to be offered; they should also be created in an open dialogue between most involved actors: educational field, social partners and state.

PREPARING EDUCATIONAL LEADERS TO IMPLEMENT REFORM: LESSONS FROM EASTERN EUROPE

David OLDROYD

'On the one hand is an increasingly post-industrial, post-modern world characterised by accelerating change, intense compression of time and space, cultural diversity, technological complexity, national insecurity and scientific uncertainty. Against this stands a modernistic, monolithic school system that continues to pursue deeply anachronistic purposes within opaque and inflexible structures'

Hargreaves, 1994:
3

'the answer does not lie in designing better reform strategies. No amount of sophistication in strategising for particular innovations or policies will ever work. It is simply unrealistic to expect that introducing reforms one by one, even major ones, in a situation which is basically not organised to engage in change will do anything but give reform a bad name'

Fullan, 1993: 3

Synopsis

This paper first synthesises some current thinking about educational reform in general and the preparation of educational leaders which requires multi-level, complex and holistic strategies focusing on both individuals and institutions. It then examines the purposes and content of educational reform which is impacting on school leaders before considering the qualities, skills and attitudes they need in order to cope with such changes. It argues that the development of a sustainable infrastructure for reform (a situation organised to engage in change) depends on the selection, empowerment and support of key people at several levels within the educational system. Multiple strategies which network with one another seem desirable in rapidly transforming situations where relying on monolithic, single systems for reform is no longer appropriate. The need for a blend of top-down, lateral and bottom up approaches (contingency theory of reform) is advocated. A variety of approaches to pre-service, induction and in-service development of school leaders in the USA and UK is briefly noted. Experience of preparing educational leaders in recent years in Poland is then analysed drawing on three contrasting but inter-related strategies, inviting Czech readers to reflect on the relevance of these strategies for their own reform initiatives. Key questions addressed are:

1. What have we learned about the nature of educational change and its leadership?
2. What are the general and specific development needs of educational leaders in reform projects and in schools?
3. How might a sustainable development culture be created for and by educational leaders?

1. INTRODUCTION: THE PURPOSES AND CHALLENGE OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Let us first remind ourselves of the fundamental reason for educational reform in Eastern Europe and indeed throughout the world. It is the creation of a citizenship for stable political democracy and the individual productivity of thought and action required for economic success in an increasingly competitive global market. As the millennium approaches, educators also have the challenge of assisting individuals to establish their own identities amidst the increasing uncertainty and choice in rapidly transforming societies in the post-modern era. In the countries of central and eastern Europe, the unlocking of totalitarian authority has particularly freed the younger generation from a life of service to a pre-ordained ideology. They can now share the universal aspiration of youth around the world for an increasingly creative and examined life at the same time rich in choice but also beset with turbulence. One can ask whether schools need reforming or whether we should be aiming to transform them given the rapid transformation of society in general!

If the ends of educational reform are these purposes for society and individuals, then the means of achieving these ends are:

☐ the teachers who promote student learning through the productivity of their thought and action in the school room and
☐ the managers or leaders of schools who make this productivity possible by creating conditions within the schools which support the learning of both students and teachers

Reform is essentially a process of learning for organisations, leaders, teachers and the pupils themselves who must always be the ultimate beneficiaries of any reform effort. The school leaders too need the support of other leaders outside the school within the superstructure of districts, regions and the nation state. Indeed, within the context of the transforming nations of central and eastern Europe, the international superstructure of the European Union is playing a significant role in providing the impetus and resources for the reforms needed to ensure access to the European community of nations. Individuals and institutions in the superstructure of the education system also must learn if reform is to be implemented. Thus educational reform has always a dual focus on individual human development and on the development of social structures or organisations. This dualism exists at several levels. The consequence is that educational reform requires a holistic multi-level approach. to the preparation of leaders of reform from the level of the classroom to the level of the ministry and the international reform project. Figure 1 provides a summary of this multi-level complexity.

Figure 1: MULTI-LEVEL COMPLEXITY OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM

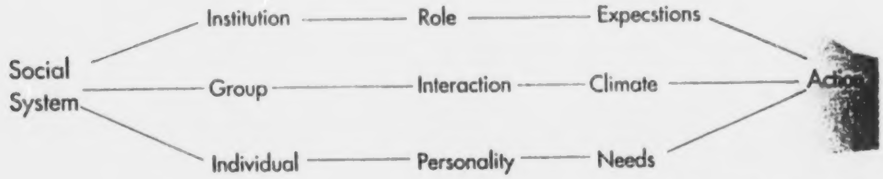
	Institutions	**Individuals**
Superstructure	International Projects (temporary institution)	Foreign and local experts and change facilitators
	Ministries and PMUs	Civil servants and project managers
	Provincial Education Authorities	Inspectors and trainers
	District Education Authorities	Officers
Infrastructure	Schools	School leaders
	Teams of teachers	Team leaders
	Classroom	Individual teachers and pupils

Unfortunately, if the two quotations at the head of this paper are to be taken seriously, school systems around the world can be seen as highly resistant to reform:

'modernistic, monolithic school system that continues to pursue deeply anachronistic purposes within opaque and inflexible structures' presenting educational reformers with 'a situation which is basically not organised to engage in change' the result will be to 'give reform a bad name'

Reformers are faced with the challenge of changing both institutions and the individual simultaneously if they are to avoid 'giving reform a bad name'. There is nothing new in this dualism. One of the classic models from organisational theory devised many years ago reminds us of this dualism with which all reformers must deal;

Figure 2: THE NATURE OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS



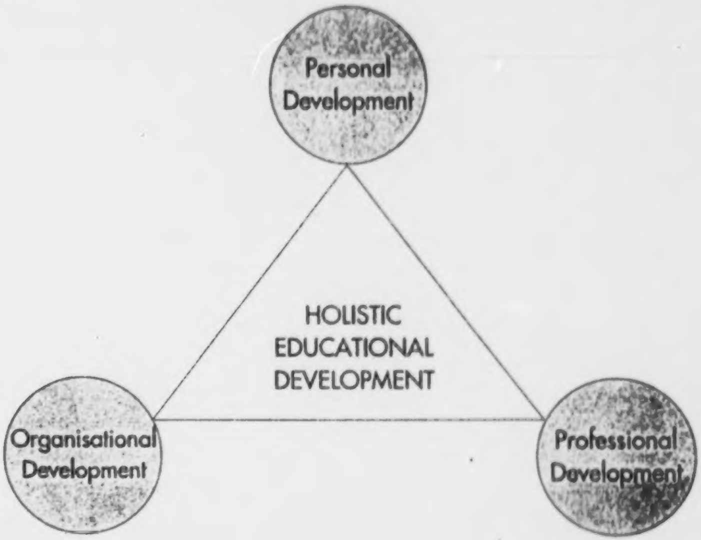
Getzels and Guba, 1957

To reform social systems, whether they are schools, local education authority infrastructures for administration and support, or entire national educational systems, one must work on the individual, the group and the institution; the persons, their interactions and their roles; their needs, attitudes and the institutional expectations, before the action which the reform requires can be achieved.

Managing reform is not simply a technical matter. A complex interplay of politics, economics, sociology and psychology; is involved in changing organisations, roles and skills as well as personal beliefs and attitudes. The changes, particularly at school level, usually comprise a combination of materials, behaviours and beliefs. It is easier to change materials than behaviours or beliefs. What people value and believe is often deeply embedded in their sub-conscious minds and may take a long time to change. In sum, educational reform is a continuing process of learning for the actors involved. It involves changing material and social structures and cultures: both 'restructuring' institutions, 'reculturing' the norms and values prevailing in these institutions which requires 'reskilling' individuals and helping them to 'realign' their beliefs. To facilitate these '4 r's' of reform requires considerable time, artistry and a fifth 'r' – resources.

However, one must try to simplify the challenge facing reformers, for they too have to learn the art of facilitating change. Figure 3 suggests three simultaneous processes of development which must be attended to in any reform process. The personal development front is the one which is often neglected

Figure 3: EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT – THE MISSING LINK?



Personal development is the 'missing link' illustrated in Figure 3. In the final analysis, it is the persons who occupy the roles, particularly the roles of leaders and change facilitators, within the institutions who must learn new things in order to implement reform. From the intervention of European Union experts to the actions of individuals at the sharp end of implementing reform, a subtle linkage of thought, word and action

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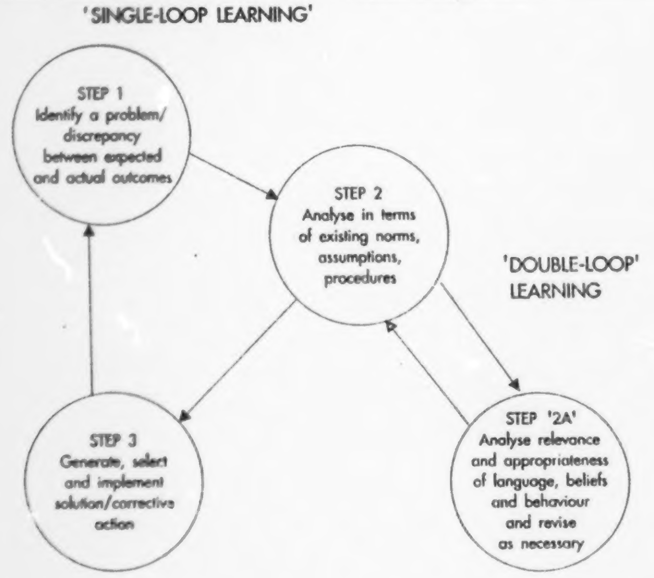
comprises the reality of translating planned change into the performance of individuals. Whether the new actions involve teaching and learning, the use of new materials, new styles of management, exercising new responsibilities, new forms of evaluation and review, success or failure in implementation depends on individual resourcefulness in learning and doing. For both the leaders of reform and the school leaders who may be its target, new realities need to be constructed and dealt with, both within themselves and in their roles within their institutions. Figure 4 maps four levels at which the reformer and school leader must be capable of making sense of what is happening in conditions of rapid change.

Figure 4: MULTI-LEVEL REALITIES IN THE POST-MODERN WORLD

- **intra-personal** (being in touch with your own inner self and your core beliefs through double-loop learning)
- **inter-personal**(two or more separate personalities engaged in a collaboration)
- **intra-cultural** (the variations in belief and behaviour within the same culture)
- **inter-cultural** (the variations in belief and behaviour between cultures)

The challenge of managing and implementing educational reform requires a high level of consciousness and understanding of the processes operating at the four levels of reality as well as of the processes of change. Double loop learning or 'thinking about thinking' (metacognition) is a desirable intellectual skill for educational leaders to employ. Figure 5 illustrates double loop learning.

Figure 5: DOUBLE-LOOP LEARNING – THINKING ABOUT THINKING

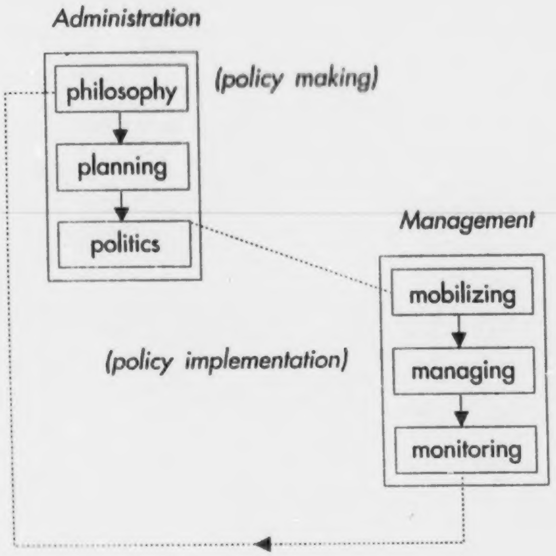

'SINGLE-LOOP LEARNING'
STEP 1 Identify a problem/ discrepancy between expected and actual outcomes
STEP 2 Analyse in terms of existing norms, assumptions, procedures
'DOUBLE-LOOP' LEARNING
STEP 3 Generate, select and implement solution/corrective action
STEP '2A' Analyse relevance and appropriateness of language, beliefs and behaviour and revise as necessary

Bennett, 1994

2. THE NATURE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

We have learned a great deal about the process of educational change during the last twenty years, at least in the developed OECD countries where sustained and increasingly specialised research into policy and practice has been carried out. It is clear that leadership plays a crucial role in the process of policy-making and policy implementation (practice). This being the case, let us clarify the nature of leadership before examining how leaders might be prepared for their role in the reform process.

Figure 6: THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP THE P3M3 MODEL



Hodgkinson, 1992

The distinction in Hodgkinson's model between policy making and policy implementation is a crucial one in relation to educational reform. Throughout the world, policy making in significant areas of educational activity, is being shifted from the superstructure of the educational system to the infrastructure – that is to the schools themselves. This process of decentralisation, for example, of financial control; deregulation, of bureaucratic constraints increases autonomy in decision-making in the emerging educational market place. Privatisation, of both schools and educational support services is a variant on this process. School managers therefore, are assuming new responsibilities for policy making as well as policy implementation. They are consequently expected to exercise greater leadership. This often involves the restructuring, reculturing and reskilling of their staff and realigning their values in line with the shared vision and commitment to reform (or even transformation) required if schools are to keep pace with the accelerating demands of the post-industrial, globalising world. As the model in figure 6 reminds us, leaders of schools and leaders of reforms both need to be competent in the dimensions of ideas, people and things that is to have:

- ☐ the intellectual capacity to articulate philosophy (vision and mission) and engage in planning (the creative imagination of how to construct a better future)
- ☐ the interpersonal, intra and inter-cultural competence to use politics (power and influence) and to mobilise (inspire and motivate) people to move to action
- ☐ the practical and organisational capacity to manage (get things done with and through other people) and monitor (find out whether things are being or have been done)

These six capacities in the P3M3 model of leadership provide a helpful framework for identifying the development needs of educational leaders, including the leaders of reform and the leaders of schools. It is useful to compare this typology with the recently elaborated competencies for headteachers in England and Wales (Figure 7) set out in a consultation document by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) the national body responsible for National Professional Qualifications for school teachers and managers.

Figure 7:
KEY AREAS AND TASKS FOR HEADTEACHERS IN ENGLAND AND WALES

STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL

Headteachers:

T1. Build an ethos and provide an educational vision and direction supported by parents and the local community which secures successful learning and achievement by pupils and continuous improvement in their academic, physical, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

T2. Create and implement a strategic plan which identifies appropriate priorities and targets for improving pupils' learning and achievement, increasing teacher effectiveness and school improvement and which relates to overall financial planning.

T3. Ensure that there is commitment to the aims, motivation to achieve them, and involvement in meeting long, medium and short-term objectives and targets which secure the educational success of the school.

T4. Ensure that the management, finance, organisation and administration of the school supports its vision, aims and objectives for good teaching, learning and improved standards of achievement.

T5. Monitor, evaluate and review the effects of policies, priorities and targets of the school in practice and take the necessary action for improvement.

LEARNING AND TEACHING

T6. Create and maintain an environment conducive to effective learning, good teaching, good behaviour and discipline.

T7. Establish a clear school code where cultural, social and religious differences are respected and where moral and spiritual growth and social responsibility are secured.

T8. Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and the quality and standards of all pupils' learning and achievements, including those with special educational or linguistic needs, in order to set and meet targets to secure improvement taking full account of national, local and school evidence.

T9. Ensure policies and practices take account of recent research and inspection evidence.

T10. Monitor, evaluate and review the curriculum and its associated assessment in order to identify areas for improvement.

PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

T11. Create a positive climate, focused on improving standards of pupils' achievement, personal development and civic responsibility which maximises the contribution of staff to that end and ensure their commitment to continuing professional development.

T12. Ensure professional development activities for all staff are linked to improving pupils' standards of achievement, personal development and civic responsibility to individual and school needs and to the school's strategic plan through target setting and appraisal.

T13. Plan, allocate, support and evaluate work undertaken by groups, teams and individuals, with clear roles and responsibilities for all participants.

T14. Develop and maintain effective working relationships with pupils, parents, staff and governors.

T15. Develop effective relations with the wider community.

DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

T16. Work with governors and senior colleagues to recruit and select staff of the highest possible quality.

T17. Work with senior colleagues and team leaders to deploy, develop and retain staff.

T18. Ensure the effective and efficient management and organisation of accommodation and learning resources within the school budget.

T19. Monitor, direct and review the use of all available resources in order to raise pupil achievements.

ACCOUNTABILITY

T20. Provide information, advice and support to the governing body so that it can meet its accountabilities for securing effective teaching, learning and raising standards of achievement, and meet its statutory responsibilities.

T21. Create and develop an organisation in which all staff recognise their accountability for the success of the school.

T22. Present a coherent and accurate account of the school's performance in a form appropriate to a range of audiences, e. g. governors, parents, the local community, teachers, OFSTED, the LEA etc.

T23. Fulfil professional duties as specified in the Terms and Conditions of Service of Teachers.

The core purpose of headship is described by the TTA as:

'To provide professional leadership for a school which secures its success and improvement, ensuring high quality education for all its pupils and improved standards of learning and achievement'

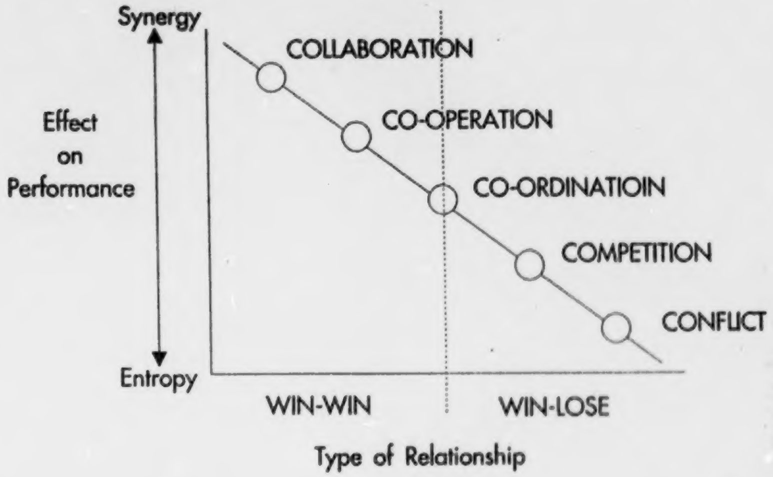
Teacher Training Agency, 1996: 4

Leadership is the clearly stated purpose, not simply 'carrying out directives' from the superstructure of the education system. High quality, improvement of the school and improved standards are the prescribed vision. School leadership is seen as stemming from a philosophy of high quality and improvement with a constant focus on the core task of the school - pupils' learning. The means to this end are the key areas and tasks. The framework is intended 'to focus on the particular aspects of headteachers' training and development' and it is 'assumed that the headteacher works with the governing body, the senior management team and other colleagues in relation to all five key areas' (p. 5) Here there is a clear indication that leadership is a collective responsibility requiring collaboration between a number of actors. The twenty three tasks within the five key areas can be seen as an elaboration of Hodgkinson's P3M3 model of leadership which moves from philosophy ('provide an educational vision and direction ... and continuous improvement') into action ('monitor, evaluation and review of the effects of policies, priorities and targets of the school in practice and take the necessary action for improvement') (p. 6) This framework will provide the basis for a curriculum through which all headteachers will be invited and later required to progress. Regional consortia of training institutions will assess headteachers' competencies and provide the relevant development activities by means of a combination of conventional workshops and open learning.

The influence of business management theories and approaches is now strong in many countries and Britain is no exception. Total Quality Management (TQM) is being adapted for educational institutions and Quality Standards development processes such as Investors in People (IIP) are increasingly being transferred from the commercial into the educational sector. There is no shortage of initiatives and many school leaders are suffering the symptoms of 'innovation fatigue' as a result. A gradual shift in the language of educational management has occurred with increasing use of terminology from the business and accountancy worlds. School leaders are shifting their roles towards that of the 'chief executive' rather than 'leading professional' (Hughes, 1973) Some commentators see a return to the scientific management with movement of earlier times with the new emphasis on 'performance indicators' and school auditing. In leadership training, the increasing emphasis on competencies as opposed to the artistry of the leader also reflects this trend. In Britain, resources for professional development are less and less available for critical advanced study in universities. The new emphasis is on specific skills training rather than the education of leaders.

In the international educational training community, collaborative leadership in policy making and implementation schools and the development of collegial and quality cultures in schools are now conventional wisdom as schools become more autonomous. Many adjectives are used to characterise the forms of leadership which encourage participative decision making, collegiality and development cultures: transformational leadership, cultural leadership, educative leadership, responsive leadership (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992). The emphasis on collaborative leadership presents for many school leaders a considerable personal challenge, a major shift in beliefs and practices where the exercise of authority has to be replaced by a greater degree of sharing in the management of tasks and people, and the use of negotiation rather than coercion. Figure 8 provides a framework for thinking about several levels of organisational relationships in schools and indeed, most organisations.

Figure 8: LEVELS OF ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS


Synergy
Effect on Performance
Entropy
COLLABORATION
CO-OPERATION
CO-ORDINATIOIN
COMPETITION
CONFLICT
WIN-WIN
WIN-LOSE
Type of Relationship

TASK ELEMENTS	RELATIONSHIP ELEMENTS
'Hard' Collaboration	'Soft' Collaboration
Involves shared:	*Involves shared:*
· goals	commitment
· resources	· surrender of autonomy
· work tasks	· feelings
· problem-solving	uncertainty
· pressure	· support
· outcomes	· trust

With the prevailing emphasis on the application of business approaches to educational management, hard collaboration tends to receive more attention than the more personal aspects of soft collaboration. The art of promoting collaboration and avoiding the slippery slope towards conflict is still, however, a central requirement for leaders of both schools and reform initiatives. It is important that the human relations and personal development sides of leadership development are not overlooked as the business paradigm of organisational life is imposed on school systems.

3. THE NATURE OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM – REFORM INVOLVES INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

Fullan, speaks of the rationalistic fallacy of seeing change as manageable in a linear, incremental, step by step way, of assuming that there is a neat progression from reform policy through strategic planning to implementation and institutionalisation of reforms. "Now we have the plan, the rest is easy!" he ironically jokes to highlight the uncertainty of the reform process. Two decades of research into educational change interventions prove that change is a highly unpredictable, often messy, process producing many unintended consequences, serving many peoples' often hidden agendas and sometimes doing more harm than good. The record of World Bank funded projects in educational innovation is discouraging. In a study of 300 such projects, Verspoor and Leno, found fewer than 10% had achieved either moderate of high success in achieving their intended outcomes. (Verspoor and Leno, 1986) When they identified the common features of the successful reform efforts, they discovered four common factors:

- ☐ permanent and locally provided in-service training for the implementers of the reforms (institutional base available to provide continuing support after the reform project is ended)
- ☐ effective support and supervision (trained trainers, facilitators, moderators)
- ☐ the purpose and content of the change could be understood by the implementers (rationale accepted, tasks sufficiently clear)
- ☐ the implementers of the reforms were motivated and committed to the reforms (the changes fits the values of the teachers and energises them)

We see here the dualism of providing appropriate institutional structures of support for teachers' learning as well as paying attention to the teachers as individual persons. It is now a truism that change is a process not an event and that it is a learning process for many individuals involved. In societies experiencing the turbulence of the 1990s, the rate of change is accelerating and a simple formula can be used to distinguish between success and failure of individuals and systems in dealing with reform:

Figure 9: SUCCESSFUL REFORM IS A RACE BETWEEN CHANGE AND LEARNING

Success = $L > C$; Failure = $C > L$; where l = learning and C = change.

Whitaker. 1993

These formulae can apply equally to unplanned change for example the spread of drug abuse among young people, or planned change such as strategic reforms promoted by governments or institutional innovations promoted by school leaders. The World Bank meta-evaluation pointed, as have many other studies, to the inadequate provision of time. support and resources for helping the key actors in the reform process to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes needed if they were to believe, think and perform in new ways. What has become increasingly apparent is the importance of people's self-esteem in facing up to what may seem impossible demands for results and new skilled behaviour. Gene Hall in the classic and much researched studies of levels of use of innovations and peoples' concerns, noted that initial concerns about change are very personal and that the focus of most peoples' attention is first on themselves in relation to change, before their attention turns in detail to the nature of the change itself and finally to its impact on the target group. These studies of peoples' concerns have been replicated many times and the same sequence of preoccupations have been observed:

Figure 10: SEQUENCE OF CONCERNS ABOUT IMPLEMENTING REFORM

SELF ---------> TASK ---------> IMPACT

Hall and Loucks, 1977

The conclusion one can draw is that the leader of change must pay attention to the primacy of self-concern in the change process. Those who implement change, and indeed the leaders of reform themselves, need to be supported psychologically as well as materially. This need is demonstrated by the growing popularity of personal development courses which aim to increase confidence and resilience and to build self-esteem as well as inter-personal skills (Oldroyd, 1996)

People learn but organisational conditions, in particular organisational cultures, can prohibit learning. A recent study of reform efforts in Hong Kong demonstrates the failure of a system-wide reform effort to raise the quality of teacher education. The planned outputs relating to provision of buildings and facilities were achieved, but outputs requiring long-term vision, an understanding of policy and taking risks were not achieved because of a prevailing culture of 'keeping out of trouble' and working only towards changes of a material sort, not on changes requiring changes of attitude and behaviour (Godwin, 1997) The influence of the setting into which change is introduced is possibly the most powerful factor in blocking the implementation of reform. Ekiert-Grabowska and Oldroyd (1996) summarise the factors which serve as barriers to the implementation of educational reform. The factors are arranged into three key areas: the setting into which it is being introduced; the strategy used in implementing the reform; and the nature of the innovation itself . In planning in the Czech republic, educational reforms in general and the reform of leadership development in particular, the checklist offers a useful starting point for analysis:

Figure 11: CHECKLIST OF BARRIERS TO REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

'What are the conditions required of the innovation, the strategy and the setting if change is to succeed? Where these conditions are lacking it is likely that resistance will emerge. For example, in settings where ...

- morale is low
- change facilitators are not respected
- there is a track record of failed innovation
- risk-taking is discouraged
- leaders are inflexible in their attitudes
- there is little outside support ...

... teachers and school leaders will be less motivated to support change strategies which ...

- are unaccompanied by practical training and support on-the-job
- do not adapt to developing circumstances
- do not recognise local needs
- offer no sense of collective 'ownership'
- do not build a 'critical mass' for change

Neither will they commit themselves to innovations which:

- are not seen as beneficial
- cannot be clearly understood
- are at odds with their professional beliefs
- are inadequately resourced'

Ekiert-Grabowska and Oldroyd, 1996

This rather daunting checklist elaborates what Fullan labelled in the quotation at the beginning of this paper 'a situation which is basically not organised to engage in change'. It points to a paradox of reform which can be expressed as 'before you can introduce change you must change the setting into which it is being introduced! '

4. THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

To prepare educational leaders to manage reform requires more than training as the above exploration of the nature of leadership and reform suggests. Leadership needs a combination of intellectual, personal and management abilities to move from policy making to policy implementation and evaluation. Some training may help, but development is more than training. The following simple formula suggests that development is a combination of three things:

Figure 12: THREE COMPONENTS OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

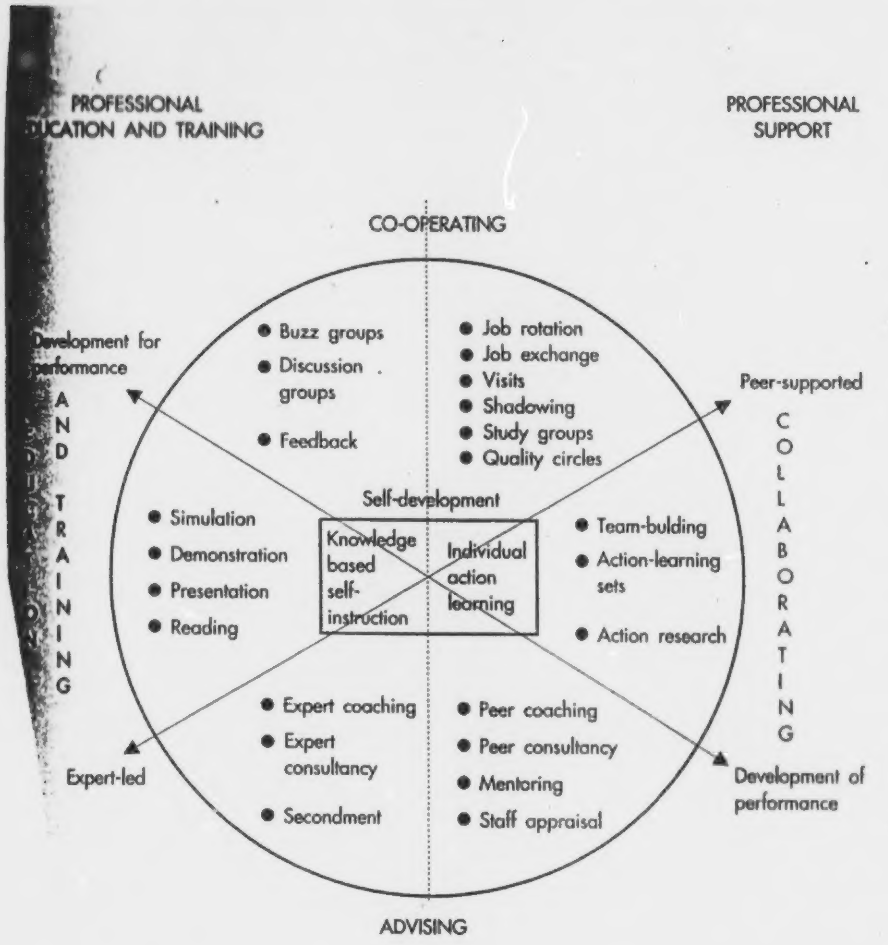
LD (leadership development) = E + T + S (education + training + support)

Oldroyd and Hall, 1991

'Education' can be seen as the cognitive perspective to raise consciousness and perform higher level thinking such as metacognition or double loop learning. This type of learning is gained in advanced studies at universities, for example. Training is more narrowly focused on technical skills such as planning or being an effective coach and can be found in workshop activities; support implies creating the conditions in the work place so that a job is achievable and having continuous assistance on-the-job to stimulate 'reflection in- and on-action' and to develop leadership performance. It is by definition, only available in the workplace. Thus a combination of all three components is highly desirable if a leadership development is to be successful. Development involving these three elements is, of course, hard and costly to provide.

A general model for linking conventional educational and training (usually provided off-site) to on-the-job support is shown in figure 13.

Figure 13: MAP OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES


PROFESSIONAL
UCATION AND TRAINING
PROFESSIONAL
SUPPORT
CO-OPERATING
Development for performance
A N D T R A I N I N G
Buzz groups
Discussion groups
Feedback
Job rotation
Job exchange
Visits
Shadowing
Study groups
Quality circles
Peer-supported
C O L L A B O R A T I N G
Self-development
Simulation
Demonstration
Presentation
Reading
Knowledge based self-instruction
Individual action learning
Team-bulding
Action-learning sets
Action research
Expert coaching
Expert consultancy
Secondment
Peer coaching
Peer consultancy
Mentoring
Staff appraisal
Expert-led
Development of performance
ADVISING

Oldroyd and Hall, 1991

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Figure 13 places self-development at the heart of the holistic array of learning activities which can be combined to reinforce the development of leadership capacity. In one sense, human beings with free will cannot be developed, they can only develop themselves by choosing to learn and use new ideas and behaviours. But the designers of development programmes for leaders and other professionals, have a wide range of learning activities upon which they can construct a quality programme. Quality is often defined as 'fitness for purpose' and just as in the best classroom teaching, the best development programmes should fit the needs of the learners and the purposes of the development being designed. Coaching, either by experts or between peers is a powerful source of feedback in leadership development and is a key factor in linking what is learned in formal educational or training courses to performance on the job.

A much simpler model for the development of skills is shown in figure 14. It suggests that all off-site learning activities with the purpose of eventually improving on-the-job performance should incorporate action planning for on-the-job application of the new learning and support for its use.

Figure 14: LEARNING SKILLS FROM THEORY TO ON-THE-JOB PERFORMANCE

ELEMENT	OUTCOME	EFFECT ON PERFORMANCE
1 THEORY What and why?	· Raised awareness, knowledge and understanding of information, concepts, skills	Low impact ↓
2 DEMONSTRATION How?		
3 PRACTICE Let me try	· Experience and evaluation of skills in a practice situation	
4 FEEDBACK How did I do?		

5	ACTION PLAN How to use?	· Plan to improve and support performance in-the-job	
6	COACHING How am I using?	· Support for and improved performance in-the-job	High impact

Much of the skills training attempted in preparing school leaders to implement reform fails to get beyond the first level of providing information and theory. Knowledge for understanding the reform is, of course, an essential starting point, but impact on performance as an implementer of reform will be low for most people without the additional steps. These involve:

☐ experiential learning in the workshop – demonstration, practice and feedback, and

☐ the linking of that learning to the real world of the workplace (as opposed to the 'otherworldliness' of the training centre) by means of action planning and coaching on-the-job

Weindling (1991) in a survey of practice in preparing school principals in the USA found a variety of programmes relating to three stages of their careers:

☐ pre-service – almost all American states require a certification procedure before a person can become a principal. This usually means a master's degree and an approved programme in educational administration at a designated university or college. Such programmes often include internships for the prospective principals. TTA policy on school management development in the UK has been cited above. The creation of a four step hierarchy of National Professional Qualifications and Standards (Qualified Teacher Status; Expert Teacher; Subject Leader; National Qualification for Headship) will mean that all aspiring school leaders will eventually have a prior management qualification as a Subject Leader. However for many years it has been assumed that one of the functions of headteachers is to groom their deputies for becoming headteachers – a type of informal apprenticeship.

☐ induction – in the first years of being a head teacher some form of informal or formal mentoring is commonly used both in the US and UK. In 1995 the British government initiated a scheme labelled HEADLAMP (Headteacher Leadership and Management Programme) whereby every new headteacher received a grant with which to enrol in courses specially commissioned from consortia of higher education institutions in collaboration with the headteacher associations. Unfortunately the take up of these courses has been very disappointing, largely due to the fact that new headteachers are so overworked!

☐ in-service – a huge range of schemes and approaches have been tried in both the US and UK for the development of already practising headteachers. They include peer assisted learning, informal collegial support groups, facilitated action learning sets, management development centres, distance learning, school-based management self-development, assessment centres, headteacher appraisal schemes, as well as long and short courses, both accredited and non-accredited, provided by local authorities and higher education establishments.

These can not all be described, but they encompass in varying degrees the attributes of professional development set out in figures 9 and 10. Policy makers in the field of leadership preparation and development have to consider the balance of options along a number of dimensions:

theory ----------------- practice
knowledge for understanding ----------------- knowledge for action
off-the-job ----------------- on-the-job
centre-based ----------------- school-based

competency-based assessment and training ---------------- reflective practice

expert-led ---------------- peer-supported and self development

The numbers of school leaders who require development education, training and support are huge. A particularly difficult balance for policy makers has to be found between large scale national infrastructure developing investment and smaller scale local initiatives. We will now examine how these alternatives have been pursued in Poland in the development of school leaders in recent years.

5. LESSONS FROM POLISH EDUCATIONAL REFORM

The challenge for Poland after its final liberation from totalitarian control in 1989 was, in Fullan's phrase, how to create 'a situation organised to engage in change'. Situations comprise people, institutions and resources. The art of strategic planning and policy-making is to prepare the people, the institutions and the resources (put another way – the materials, the training centres and schools and the facilities and instructional materials) to engage in change, for they are 'the situation'. Of course people are the key to all these changes and perhaps the most important of all reform strategies is the selection of key people as leaders from within the country, training institutions and schools who will become a sustainable critical mass for creating and maintaining the new situation.

In the 1995 OECD review of Polish education the role of the school directors in promoting quality was stated as follows:

> 'in a situation of limited financial resources the work of schools may only be improved by making them more efficient, by making better use of available resources. Bearing mind the autonomy of schools, properly prepared teams managing a school are best suited to improve their work through the more efficient use of resources. This is an argument in favour of decentralisation. In this way, the costly and risky reform from above can be replaced to some extent by initiatives of various kinds in the schools themselves'
> Ministry of National Education, 1995: 143-4

Decentralisation, income generation, team leadership and efficient resource management are not surprisingly main items on the agenda for school leader development.

Often too little attention has been given to the preparation of the teachers and administrators to implement the legislated or planned changes. The participants often had insufficient time to absorb the change. For example, teachers have sometimes simply given materials and sent to their classes to use them. It was not recognised that they had to attend first to their self-concerns and understanding and accepting the new tasks involved (figure 10). The change was faster than their opportunity to learn (figure 9) There was often a lack of sufficient funding to acquire the necessary equipment and many of the barriers listed in Figure 11 were not recognised by those promoting the reforms in the classroom

A high proportion of school leaders in Poland are newly appointed. It is obvious that they are experiencing an intensification of their roles and tasks. In a highly fluid period of social, political and economic transformation, no single strategy of preparing school and other educational leaders is appropriate. A range of approaches offers better hope of some success, given the high probability of low impact which has been the record of so much reform effort in 'monolithic school systems'. Contingency theory is regarded as the most sophisticated way of summing up how leaders should approach their 'translation of philosophy into action'. To be contingent means to adjust one's strategy and approach to the conditions inherent in the situation which one is trying to manage. The equestrian proverb 'horses for courses' captures the flexibility of a contingent approach to policy and planning – choose the best horse for the course you are planning to ride! In framing policies for reform and turning them into plans, one can adopt a contingent approach just as in managing a school or other educational institution. The Polish projects described below offer three strategies as a basis for reform policies. Each is a 'horse' for a different 'course'. In particular, each requires very different levels of funding and support. Although there was no co-ordinated national planning, of a contingency strategy, the three projects for preparing educational leaders emerged since 1992. They represent three broad strategies for diffusing reform: bottom-up; lateral and top-down. Each received foreign assistance, two by aid grants and all three were supported by foreign experts. However, whatever success they have enjoyed has been highly dependent on high quality Polish leaders who were empowered by their collaboration with foreign experts and the provision of financial resources for the development of training materials and programmes. Table 1 summarises the three approaches.

Table 1: Three approaches to school leader development

	Model A	**Model B**	**Model C**
Diffusion	Bottom-up	Lateral	Top-down
Title	Organisational Development Moderators Project	School Directors' Management Self-development and Educational Management Centre Project	TERM-Improving the Administration of Education Project
Approach	LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE DIFFUSION NETWORK	NATIONAL-REGIONAL CASCADE

Location	Kielce	Katowice	Warsaw + 15 provinces
Funding and source	Self-funding by national and provincial Training Centre	UK- Know-how Fund/Polish Govt. – 175k ECU	EU Phare – TERM 4.7 MECU
Duration	1992-1997	1992-1997	1995-1997

	Model A	**Model B**	**Model C**
Diffusion	Bottom-up	Lateral	Top-down
Change strategy	Moderator training for Organisational Development of individual schools -	Single training centre, materials and facilitator development ; post-graduate course	Materials development, training centre development (15) and trainer training
Change agents	One foreign expert, one Training Centre and selected Moderators	One foreign expert, one Training Centre writing and publishing team, one University Centre team; national network of 44 facilitators	EU consortium of 15 foreign experts, Polish expert team (8), 160 trainers in 16 Training Centres
Target Group(s)	Selected staff from university, education authority, Training Centres and schools	School Directors, deputies and teachers who are prospective school leaders	Provincial Inspectors and Trainers, District Officers, School Directors (1320)
Scope of impact	30 schools	2 centres of excellence for education, writing, publishing; 44 part-time facilitators; 8000 School Directors; 85 University Centre graduates	8 Expert/consultants 16 Training Centres 160 Trainers 1320 administrators

Sustainability	Depends on further funding by the Provincial Education Authority and commitment of local leaders	Dissemination by self-funding facilitators and continuing education post-graduate university programme	Training Centre and independent trainer course provision in the market place of continuing professional development
Evaluation	National Training Centre summative evaluation	National summative self- evaluation co-ordinated by third party evaluator	External summative evaluation by foreign and Polish experts

Model A aimed to develop autonomous schools strongly connected with the local community. The development focused on three levels: at the individual level - developing teachers' competence in the classroom; at the team level promoting team work, solving problems, resolving conflicts and setting up self-development groups; at school level, creating vision and a positive culture and reforming education from the bottom upwards. Essen and Halle Universities in Germany provided the consultancy support. This bottom-up approach is powerful in that it focuses on 'change from within the school aided by the external moderators who are trained in the necessary consultancy skills and techniques to facilitate organisational development (OD). The OD process involves restructuring, for example through the creation of OD working groups and self-development groups to identify problems through surveying the perceptions of school stakeholders (parents, pupils, members of the local community, teachers). It also attempts reculturing through the encouragement of a problem-solving attitude among the staff whereby they learn to believe that, through participative consultation and action, even quite persistent problems can be tackled. Success really does depend on the conditions within each school as well as the skills of the moderator. Impact can be high where a critical mass (figure 11) of staff within the school become committed to and 'take ownership' of the OD process.

This approach really does make a direct attack on the 'situation not basically organised to engage in change' which Fullan in the opening quotation identified as a major obstacle to reform. Of course, the role of the school leader in reculturing towards a more problem-solving orientation is quite crucial. Her or his function and skills connects the development of the individuals to the development of the institution, the dualism of social reform with which we started this paper. This bottom-up approach is focused on individual schools and as a result, does not lead to rapid diffusion. Spreading the benefits of OD depends on sustaining spreading the support of the team of moderators. This requires an institutional and economic base. The provincial in-service training centre is the base but the economic viability of the work of the moderators is by no means certain as it depends on external funding from a provincial authority with little development capital to invest. Nevertheless, the bottom-up approach which encourages initiative at the level of the individual institution offers hope that the new structures and culture within the school can help solve the problem of sustainability by encouraging a pro-active attitude towards that very problem.

Model B has been termed a lateral model of diffusion. A joint institutional base with overlapping personnel became the centre of excellence from which the leadership development programmes were laterally diffused by facilitators who were provided with intensive training for their dissemination roles. This particular project from the outset had the vision of empowering the Polish leaders in two institutions – a training centre and a new development centre within a university to take control and create a sustainable centre of excellence linking the two institutions. Modest funding was provided over four years for foreign consultancy and to reward the efforts of the teams of Polish writers, university course designers and teachers, and the facilitators based in training centres throughout Poland. A combination of management self-development (supported self-study in the workplace) and conventional workshops for school directors was used. The self-study was based on three modules: Managing Self; Managing Teams and Managing School. These three modules are based on the three strands of development (personal, professional and organisational) for holistic educational improvement illustrated in figure 3. The modules combine:

☐ text on management theory and descriptions of good practice
☐ instruments for self and institutional performance review and action planning for development

In this way they attempt to bridge the gap between theory and on-the-job performance, the 'holy grail' of training design referred to in figure 6. The facilitators offer support to groups of school directors. They also market the materials and their services, acting as self-employed entrepreneurs. It is this extrinsic motivation to enhance normally low salaries earned as provincial training centre trainers that has powered the lateral diffusion process. Funding for the purchase of materials and the services of the facilitators or for the university post-graduate qualification for those who attend the taught programme at the university, comes from the gminy (local districts) school budgets or the participants themselves. The most thorough learning experience is gained by those who study the combined university and self-development programme over a period of three semesters. The high relevance of the programme to the daily work of school directors is, as in Model A, a much appreciated feature of this approach. Its weakness lies in the focus only on a single participant from each school. There is no 'critical mass' of staff from within each school as is the case in Model A.

Model C is essentially a top-down EU funded initiative, a large scale innovation in the training of school leaders involving the upgrading of provincial in-service education centres and the creation of cadres of trainers in provincial training centres as well as the further empowerment of a group of national educational management experts who acted as writers of training modules and trainers of the trainers. The strategy adopted by the leaders of this large scale project was congruent with the principle of empowerment now widely advocated in the management of schools and education systems. From the outset, two approaches to empowerment were adopted:

☐ decentralisation – of budgets to teams of Polish experts who worked with foreign experts to produce the 15 generic and specific workshop modules; and of responsibility to design modules within a framework of broad guidelines

- ☐ indigenisation – the maximum use of Polish materials development materials and the expectation that the Polish experts would take the intellectual lead in fitting the modules to the needs of the Polish target groups

Cascade models often lead to a diminishing ownership of reform and innovation as the initiative from the top passes down to the eventual users of the innovation. The notion of empowerment reverses this concept. It aims to increase the power of the users 'down the line'. This was done by investing in 16 regional centres and a cadre of 10 trainers in each. They were provided with enhanced facilities and an indigenous programme of generic (Organisation Development; Communication; Managing Change; Quality Assurance; Information Technology) and specific modules for workshops (for School Directors; Inspectors; Gminy Officers; Training Centre Trainers). The 160 project trainers were first taken through the workshops as participants by the Polish experts with demonstration and on-the-job coaching by the foreign experts. One outcome of the trainer training was individual action plans for the workshops they would deliver to the target groups. In their turn, the trainers delivered the workshops, this time coached by the Polish experts as they did so. In this way, the six elements of effective skill development shown in figure 6 were deployed. Only at the final point of the cascade was the use of coaching on-the-job neglected although action planning by the four target groups was encouraged. The sustainability of the leadership development provided by this project is not guaranteed. The temporary system created by the project disbands in June 1997 and the EU funding ceases. The hope is that the 16 regional centres and a national association of the trainers established through the initiative of the trainers themselves will find ways of deploying the copious supplies of workshop training materials donated to every training centre. Unlike the facilitators in the Model B project, the trainers had no experience of marketing and income-generation during the project. But already there are signs that the more ambitious trainers and certainly, several of the experts are becoming quite proactive in planning their own extension of project activity.

There was, in practice, considerable overlap and networking of personnel between these projects. The Polish Experts in the large EU Phare – TERM project included two leaders from each of the earlier projects A and B. One of the foreign experts (the writer of this paper) played a leading role in both projects B and C and there was considerable overlapping of substantive content between the earlier and the later project training philosophies and materials. There was even an initial rivalry between the protagonists from the Kielce and Katowice 'camps' which was eventually transformed by skilful Polish leadership into a creative collaboration. The 'slippery slope illustrated in figure 8 was ascended! Solving inter-cultural problems such as these is aided by the process of metacognition or 'thinking about thinking' or 'double loop learning' illustrated in Figure 5. Being able to step outside the emerging conflict allows one to ask: "What is going on here?" "Why is our thinking leading to conflict?" "Do we really want this to happen?". High level leadership skills such as these are important in preparing the leaders of projects for developing educational leadership. Indeed, the intellectual challenge of leadership in education systems in periods of rapid transition requires the flexibility of thought and analysis which metacognition and a higher level of consciousness can bring.

The development of the consciousness of educational leaders is the way to prepare them for implementing reform – they need intrapersonal, inter personal and intercultural awareness (figure 4) not simply technical knowledge, to manage change in turbulent times. This is why the education not simply the training of leaders is so important and why we should pay attention to personal development as well as professional and organisational development.

Change happens through, with, of and by people. As already explained, it is more than a technical matter. It is social, political and above all, psychological. It requires educational leaders to pay attention to attitudes and values both in themselves and those whom they wish to carry out the planned innovations. All the actors in a change process must develop their consciousness in a way that disposes them to accept the need for the reform and to commit themselves to it. People need time for this to happen, and time for reforms to take hold is often wildly underestimated. Society's levers of development are both institutions and individual people. All three projects described in this paper targeted at both institutions and individuals in varying degrees. All three however, gave first priority to the empowerment of individuals, both the developers and the target populations of school leaders and other educational administrators. They offered the indigenous leaders of change and schools tools for development which were transposed and further developed to meet indigenous needs. Of course, this required financial resources.

The three models demonstrate huge differences in the scale of funding. The bottom-up approach required no external aid other than donated consultant time; the lateral model used modest foreign funding to create an entrepreneurial momentum within the country which empowered two institutions to generate their own income and galvanised self-employed facilitators to market and support the field tested programmes. The largest scale project was able to reward the Polish experts and trainers at rates well above their normal inadequate salaries and provide them and their institutions with modern equipment for communication and development work (fax machines, computers). More significant for sustainability, these individuals and institutions have been launched into a new mode of proactive professional activity leading to further dissemination of the leadership development programmes.

6. CONCLUSION

This paper started with pessimistic quotations from two researchers into the processes of educational change. A number of ideas were then explored in suggesting that a multi-level, holistic, varied approach seemed desirable in the face of the complexity of the challenge of preparing educational leaders to manage and implement reform. The account of three strategies for preparing educational leaders has not ignored Fullan's imperative that situations must be organised to engage in change. This means creating the necessary infrastructure of institutions, materials and individuals and ensuring that they are adequately resourced. In the networking model, the level of resourcing needed is much smaller due to the reliance on the entrepreneurial initiative of the facilitator/consultants who operate in a self-employed manner requiring low overheads.

A key question, so difficult to answer, is 'how successful are these reform efforts in achieving long-term changes in materials, behaviours and beliefs which lead to improved leadership performance? '. Rarely is there substantial investment in the evaluation of impact of reform efforts. This is one reason for the pessimism which abounds in the literature on planned educational change. Nevertheless, there is now enough understanding of the complexity of educational innovation to provide clear understanding that the key to successful reform is to invest in people, and, through the processes of education, training and support, promote:

☐ reskilling (professional development) – a technical and educational process

☐ restructuring and reculturing (organisational development) – a socio-political process
☐ realigning (personal development) – a psychological process

People's skills, values, confidence and performance as facilitators of change are central to the implementation of reform. If 'the anachronistic purposes' pursued by 'monolithic school systems' are to be replaced by more suitable purposes and provision for future generations of young Europeans, it will be through the efforts of reflective, committed and empowered people . The challenge for the Czech Republic in supporting such people is no less daunting than in other countries in the post-modern world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are related to the five sections of the paper and serve both as a summary of the paper and general guidelines for stimulating reflection about educational leadership and reform:

Meeting the complex challenge of reform

1. Focus on the setting for reform ('the situation organised to engage in change') as well as the reform itself and include strategies for making the setting more receptive.
2. Work at multiple levels to achieve a consistent approach and support between levels (superstructure and infrastructure).
3. Work simultaneously on organisational development (restructuring and reculturing the setting) professional development (reskilling the people) and personal development (realigning peoples' values and commitment).
4. Focus both on the individuals and their institutions in the interest of a holistic reform strategy.
5. See change as learning and attend to developing the learners' consciousness of intra- and interpersonal and cultural realities, their ability to think about thinking and use 'double loop learning'.

Educational leadership

6. Focus on the full range of leadership attributes for policy-making and implementation – ideas, people and things in moving from philosophy into action.
7. Keep a sharp focus on teaching and learning as the ultimate purpose of education
8. Make the leadership of the leaders of reform be congruent with that of the school

leaders they are preparing to implement reform (empowerment, decentralisation, contingency).

9. Keep a balance between a scientific and artistic approach to educational management, between the 'chief executive' and the 'leading professional' roles.
10. Prepare leaders for collaborative, win-win relationships by encouraging both 'hard' and 'soft' collaboration.

The reform process

11. Start with a detailed analysis of the needs of participants in the reform process.
12. Recognise the self-concerns of the participants as well as their need to understand clearly the tasks of implementing there from and its purpose.
13. Attend to the barriers inherent in the setting, the reform strategy and the innovation itself.
14. Ensure adequate resources, incentives and support for the learners and disseminators of the reform.

Leadership development

15. Provide a balance of education, training and support for the development of educational leaders.
16. Give a high priority to linking off-the-job learning to on-the-job performance by means of action planning and coaching.
17. Recognise the differing needs of school leaders at different stages of their careers (pre-service, induction, in-service).

Lessons from Poland

18. Adopt a contingency approach and multiple strategies for leadership preparation (bottom-up, lateral and top-down approaches).
19. Select capable project leaders capable of metacognition and able to grasp the complexity of the reform process and network their contributions between projects.
20. Create indigenous programmes for school and school leader development, based on theories and models of effective learning and reform.
21. Focus on sustaining the reform by building the capacity of institutions and the empowerment of individuals.
22. In designing reform projects, model the good practice (decentralisation, local autonomy, rewarding initiative) advocated for schools.

MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION: AN OVERVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Gábor HALÁSZ

INTRODUCTION

The question of how to improve the management of education systems has been in the focus of the attention of educational leaders since the early seventies. The fact that there is a crisis of management behind the general educational crisis was demonstrated among the first by P. H. Coombs in his famous book "The world education crisis" published in 1968. Since then many developed countries have introduced more or less substantial reforms which fundamentally altered the distribution responsibilities in their education systems. The main direction of these reforms is often described by the term decentralisation but, in fact, the phenomenon is much more complex than something that can be described by one term.

The reasons behind the reforms are multiple. The most frequently mentioned one can be listed as follows:

- the end of the period of great systemic reforms, the discontentment with the results of them and the need to find new and more efficient mechanisms to introduce changes into the system
- the disillusionment engendered by the ineffectiveness of national level measures aiming at promoting equality of possibilities, and the turning of attention towards better elaborated local and institutional level measures
- the increasing reliance on market forces as a possible tool to achieve quality and improve efficiency and effectiveness (based partly on rational assumptions, partly on neo-liberal ideologies)
- the increasing complexity of the education systems as the consequence of their quantitative expansion and the growing difficulty to assure co-ordination within the system
- the increasing inter-relatedness of the education systems with other social subsystems, especially the system of employment, the system of public administration and the fiscal system or with other social processes like, for instance, the reproduction of social stratification
- the general crisis of the political systems of modern societies, as it appears in the growing difficulties of government, especially the difficulty to assure co-ordination between different policy areas, and in the loss of confidence in the capacity of the traditional democratic institutions to solve the acute social and economic problems
- the difficulties to finance public services, including education, at an appropriate level following the slowing down of economic growth, when resources become scarcer while the needs are continuously increasing
- the general policy responses given to the challenge of massive youth unemployment which have been characterised by putting the stress on local adaptation, responsibility sharing with social partners and increasing co-operation between education, social and employment policies
- the tendency of "decentralising" the solution of industrial conflicts through stressing the importance of local and institutional level negotiations, supported by the democratic social movements demanding new forms of participation

☐ the growing purchasing power of the population which gives the possibility for an increasing number of people to buy services, including education, which have traditionally been provided free by public authorities

☐ the growing internationalisation (or, in our continent, Europeanisaton) of education leading to the relative reduction of the importance of the nation-state as the most important traditional legitimisation basis of state control and intervention

☐ the growing role of "non-traditional" forms of education and learning, based on new methods (distance learning, open education) and conveyed by media outside the formal school system (company based training, open universities, learning through the INTERNET etc.)

All these inter-related reasons – which mutually reinforce each other – reflect a deep social, economic, political and educational transformation of modern Western societies. The reforms of educational management and governance that have been introduced since the seventies and which are far from being completed, have naturally been influenced by all these social, political, economic and educational changes. When reflecting on the international context of educational management we have to bear in mind the complexity of these current and future challenges.

Complexity characterises not only the motives of the reforms but also the reforms themselves. The simple term of decentralisation, as already mentioned, cannot describe the complexity of changes. What has happened – or more precisely what is currently happening – in most modern education systems is, in fact, a kind of redefinition of responsibilities, including both the content and the holders of these responsibilities. One of the central questions in this process is certainly the redefinition of the role of the state.

1. GENERAL NOTES

1.1 Management systems and management functions

When analysing how management of education and training changes in the international context we have to bear in mind some kind of definition of management and its functions. This is indispensable since the way a country organises the management of its education and training system depends largely on the functions it attributes to management.

On the one hand, management is connected with power and decision-making and the question which, therefore, has to be analysed is this: how decision-making power is distributed between different levels and actors. On the other hand, management fulfils specific functions, like, for instance, goal-setting, resource allocation, monitoring, quality assurance, assessment and development. The way these functions are fulfilled necessarily depends on how the education and training system is managed, and – looking at it from the other side – the way a country manages its education and training system depends largely on how these specific functions are defined. If, for instance, evaluation and quality assurance are conceived as a public responsibility the role of public authorities is defined differently than in case of these not being conceived so.

From this point of view the British model, where traditionally industry and trade organisations have had the responsibility for certification and for assuring the quality of the certificates is radically different from the French model where certification has been a state responsibility and the task to assure the reliability of certificates lies on the state.

1.2 Management systems and training systems

The way a country manages its system of vocational-technical education depends strongly on the traditions and the inherited characteristics of the system. It is frequent to distinguish two basic models, the European and the American ones. In the first model a great proportion of pupils chooses between general or vocational education at an early stage and most of them leave the school system with some kind of vocational qualification, while in the second the overwhelming majority completes general secondary education or even higher education and leaves the school system without formal vocational qualifications (CEDEFOP, 1993).

The European training systems follow some typical models which all have their own management patterns. A distinction is often made between three typical models: (1) systems providing training within the institutions of the formal school system, (2) systems in which companies play a determining role, (3) mixed systems with a combination of the two. The first model is applied, for instance, in France and in the Mediterranean countries. The second model is followed typically in Germany (the dual system) and in other German speaking countries. The Dutch system is often quoted as following the third model.

In the first model management responsibility falls mainly on public authorities responsible for the formal school system. The institutions of the formal school system play an important role also in the second (dual) model since the general subjects are, in general, taught in schools which are part of the formal system. This model, therefore, requires a close co-operation between public authorities responsible for the management of the formal system and the companies or the organisations representing them. Thus, the way training systems are managed depends basically on how responsibility for training is shared between public authorities, on the one hand, and, economic organisations, on the other.

Another distinction which is often made stresses the difference between centralised and decentralised systems. Those countries in which public authorities have traditionally played a decisive role and companies were less involved (France for instance until the eighties), have a more centralised system than those, in which economic organisations have always taken actively part in training.

It is important to stress that there is a continuous rapprochement between the traditionally different models. Many elements of the dual model appeared in the last decades in the systems of the countries belonging to the first model. Similarly, countries with centralised systems have introduced decentralising reforms.

2. SPECIFIC FEATURES OF THE DIFFERENT MANAGEMENT LEVELS

The changes of management have to be analysed at different levels. A distinction has to be made between the national (or state) level, the regional (or local) level and the institutional level. The international context and the typical trends will be analysed separately according to these levels. Following this a typology of the main actors involved in the management of vocational education and training will be presented with examples from the European Union.

2.1 The national level

There are two major questions that can be analysed in connection with the national level management of education and training: (1) the distribution of responsibilities, and (2) the content and the scope of these responsibilities.

As far as the distribution of responsibilities is concerned there are two dimensions to be analysed. One the one hand (1.1.) management responsibilities may be distributed between different government offices (ministries). On the other hand (1.2.) responsibility may be shared between government offices and non-government agencies (representative bodies, chambers etc.).

2.1.1 THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The international scene shows a great variety in how the responsibility is distributed between different government agencies which may simply reflect different national administrative traditions, but in general this is also connected functionally to the main characteristics of the training system. It is, for instance, logical that in France, where most of the greater part of training has traditionally taken place within the formal system, the ministry of education has had extended responsibilities while, in the British system, where the role of school based training is weaker, other agencies have been playing a greater role. This also explains why in Central and Eastern Europe, where there is a tradition of direct state control over economic organisations and processes, economic (industrial, agricultural, trade etc.) ministries have had a major role in managing vocational training.

When the question of how to share responsibilities between the ministry of education and the other competent ministries is raised many arguments can be formulated in favour of all arrangements. The advantage of giving all or most of the responsibility to ministries of education is that they – at least theoretically – provide good conditions for an integrated policy of human resources and they can put an obstacle to too narrow specialisation. Ministries of education are often more open to long-term developmental perspectives than ministries of industry or labour which are more pressed by short term policy constraints. Another argument that can be formulated in favour of giving responsibility for vocational training to ministries of education is that this way they are in a way compelled to give attention to such questions as technological development or the development of skills needed by modern economy. Responsibility for vocational training may have, from this respect, a positive impact on their administrative and policy shaping behaviour.

Most countries, however, do not give too extended managerial power to educational ministries over vocational training. It is assumed that ministries of education – because of their administrative traditions and internal functional or organisational constraints, and also because they often recruit their personnel from the teaching profession or are led by persons coming from the academic world – tend to neglect the vocational aspects of education. They are not sufficiently familiar with industrial policy and its employment implications and, they therefore they tend to neglect the economic interests. They are not the best positioned to establish good working contacts with the actors of the world of work, that is chambers, unions or economic organisations, which have a necessary role in shaping and implementing training policy and which generally do not think that ministries of education are their logical partners.

The European scene is very diversified in this respect. The most frequent arrangement has been, to put it in a simplified way, that ministries of education have had responsibility for training within the institutions of the formal school system, while the ministries of labour or other government agencies have been responsible for training outside the formal system. This way of sharing of responsibility has also been based on the distinction made between initial and continuous or in-service training and on the assumption that while initial training takes place in the formal system, continuous or in-service training is organised outside it. For several reasons, as we shall see, this distinction is less clear now than earlier and the sharing of responsibilities has been undergoing changes.

The way different countries conceive the borderlines between general education and vocational training or between initial and continuous training may be reflected in the way they regulate their education and training systems. In certain countries general and vocational education are regulated by the same law (in Austria, for instance) which is a sign of stressing the unity or the commonalties and the two subsystems. In other countries there is a separate law regulating general education and another one regulating vocational training which stresses the speciality of the vocational training sphere and sometimes the commonalties of initial and continuous training (for instance the recent Adult and Vocational Act in the Netherlands).

The impossibility of fixing clear borderlines between initial and continuous training unavoidably leads to a permanent conflict between ministries of education and the other sectoral ministries in all systems where responsibility is shared according to these areas. In many cases the same teachers are using the same technical facilities within the same institutions for initial and continuous training. Certification or the evaluation of results are often made by the same agencies, but even if this is not the case some kind of agreement on the ways and criteria for evaluation has to be made. A clear separation of administrative functions would therefore be very difficult.

These conflicts can be conceived as an unavoidable phenomenon due to structural conditions which needs to seek for permanent treatment and not for some kind of final solution. But it is also possible to think about changing the structural conditions through, for instance, involving other partners or agencies who are not divided on the same lines. The involvement of social partners and local/regional communities or the creation of new inter-sectoral government agencies – which is a typical development in almost all European countries – could be considered from this point of view, as well.

When reflecting on the possibilities of treating or solving co-operation or co-ordination problems between ministries of education and ministries of labour or industry we have to refer again to the differences in administrative style and methods between these different administrative fields. Ministries of education which exercise control upon formal school systems can or traditionally could use direct administrative methods which can not and could not be used by economic or labour ministries which have to do with autonomous companies or with citizens. In the sphere of continuous training, especially if most of this is provided by economic companies, there has already been a tradition of using indirect methods of management, like general legal regulation, financial incentives, spreading information etc. On the other hand, in the field of formal education, the tradition is the use of direct management methods, like opening and closing institutions, appointing leaders, setting budgets or issuing binding instructions. These differences in administrative styles are naturally reinforcing the above mentioned structural conflicts.

In a number of countries the ministerial level administration of education has traditionally been linked with cultural or religious administration, or sometimes with the administration of youth and sports affairs. In these countries the role of the minister of education is defined and generally conceived so that he/she has to be a partner accepted by the churches, by the academic, artistic or intellectual elite, or by the sport or youth leaders. It is logical that education in such countries is often led at the national level by ministers and administrators who conceive their role as a cultural one and do not care much about establishing working relationships with employers or economic chambers.

In many European countries, as we have already referred to it, the responsibility for initial training is with the ministry of education, and the ministry of labour or other sectoral ministries are responsible for the provision of continuous training of working adults or the unemployed. The growing importance attributed to adult/continuous education and in-service training has, however, led to the reinforcement of agencies responsible for this area at governmental level since the sixties. This process has been particularly reinforced by the phenomena of youth unemployment since the early seventies because most of the measures to combat it have been associated with employment policy. Ministries of labour or other agencies linked with employment play today a much more important role in determining and implementing education and training policy than in the past.

Sharing responsibilities for education and training between ministries of education and other ministries has always been and will remain in all countries an issue of controversy which has structural reasons and which, in this respect, does not depend on the national context. National particularities may intensify this conflict but, given its structural nature, it is always present.

Since (1) no clear borderlines can be laid down between general education, on the one hand, and vocational training, on the other, and since (2) there is an unavoidable interdependence between education and training policy, on the one hand, and economic and employment policies, on the other, there is a certain level of tension between these policy fields and an overlapping of administrative responsibilities in all countries.

These tensions and overlapping become explicit especially in periods when new institutional forms which question the traditional definitions of the existing ones emerge. Most developed countries have been facing such a period for some decades. The creation of integrated upper secondary schools offering both general and vocational education within the same institution in the Scandinavian countries, the introduction of training forms based on "alternance" of learning and work in France and in some other European countries or the establishment of vocationally oriented non university higher educational institutions in many countries necessarily lead to the need to rethink the distribution of responsibilities between national level government agencies. The complicated relationships between the ministries of education and employment has been solved in a radical way in some Anglo-Saxon countries where the two field of responsibilities have been simply merged and a ministry responsible for education and employment was created. In England, for instance the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) is the central government department responsible for both areas.

2.1.2 THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHER AGENCIES

A typical development of the last two decades is the creation or the reinforcement of non-governmental organisations with responsibilities for training or other particular areas like, for instance, standards or quality assurance. These agencies often take over tasks traditionally fulfilled by the government itself. They are often operating under ministerial supervision but they have a larger scope of autonomy and since they are less exposed to political changes their institutional stability may be greater. In many cases they operate under the control several ministries and they have the representatives of the social partners also in their governing bodies. In Greece, for instance, the recently created post-secondary vocational training institutes fall under the responsibility of an agency called Organisation for Vocational Education and Training which - although it operates under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education and Religion - has an administration board with the representatives of the three ministries of labour, economy and finance.

The creation of non-government institutions is often seen as a way to overcome sectoral divisions or inter-ministerial conflicts. Sometimes it is the incapacity of the traditional administration to solve urging problems which is the cause of creating such agencies. When, for instance, in Britain a strong need appeared in the seventies for a government policy facing youth unemployment and vocational skill development, a new agency (the Manpower Services Commission), linked with the employment administration, was created for the new tasks. An increasing part of funds for vocational training were channelled to schools through this agency instead of the normal administrative channels. The National Employment Agency supervised by the ministry of labour in France plays, in many respects, a similar role.

The inter-sectoral management of vocational education and training may be assured, instead of government agencies, by semi-autonomous institutes. The German Bundesinstitute für Berufsbildung operating at federal level is a typical example. These institutes can take part in the management of the training system through exercising research, development, information dissemination and evaluation functions without having direct administrative responsibilities or resource allocation functions.

Sometimes it is not easy to make a distinction between government agencies, entrusted with administrative and resource-allocation power and institutes without such authority. The borderline between the government and the non-government institutions is clearer when the latter ones appear as private or semi-private agencies or foundations. It is interesting, that the increasing role of the European Union in financing national or sub-national (regional) level training projects encourages the creation of such agencies since the EU seems to favour these organisational forms as partners.

2.1.3 THE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

One of the most general new features of education management reforms in all developed countries is the creation of new institutional frameworks for involving the social partners into the formation and implementation of vocational education and training policy. This serves the generally accepted policy goals of establishing stronger linkages between education and industry and making educational systems more responsive to technological changes and labour market needs.

We can observe in all developed countries the establishment of new consultative or codecisive bodies or the enlargement of the competencies of old ones. It has become typical that national or local level bodies with the representatives of the different "stake-holders" participate in the definition of the policy objectives, the content of training, certification and assessment. Industrialists are frequently invited to express their views on education and training and their opinion exercises a growing impact on education policy.

In the sphere of vocational/technical or continuing education, in general, tripartite bodies are set up with the representatives of the government, the employers and the labour unions but these bodies often have other representatives as well (for instance providers of training or professional associations). This representation frequently appears also at lower (regional, local and institutional) level or in specialised bodies dealing with such particular areas as planning programmes, setting evaluation requirements, organising examinations or supervising training.

The examples could be long listed. In Denmark, for instance, the structure and content of vocational training courses is decided by the social partners in 85 trade committees. In Germany the social partners are present in the governing body of the federal institute dealing with vocational training and, at the level of the Länder, there are committees for vocational education consisting of representatives of management, labour and the Land ministries. The German chambers of industry and commence are traditionally involved directly in advising, supervising and recognising vocational education. In France there are tripartite Regional Vocational Training Committees. In Spain at the national level the General Council on Vocational Training is organised on a tripartite basis. In Italy and in Greece the social partners participate in the governing board of the national level institute dealing with the development of vocational training. In the Netherlands the national vocational education bodies are consulted by the minister of education through the national level Vocational and Adult Education Consultative Committee. The willingness to involve the social partners is typical in the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe as well, although the organisational weakness of the partners and the lack of participatory tradition often lead to formal solutions.

The sharing of responsibilities with social partners, as we can see, is not limited to the national level. There is a huge variety of consultative and decision making bodies at regional and institutional level as well. Further examples will be presented also in the sections below on the regional and school level and on the different the actors involved in managing the training system.

The involvement of the social partners into designing, delivering and assessing training goes beyond the simple establishment of consultative or decision-making bodies. There is a general tendency to open the world of education to the world of work and to establish rich linkages between them. This is based on the assumption that an ongoing partnership between the various actors ensuring permanent communication on needs and prospects can alone, in the current uncertain world, take the role what planning was playing before. The tendency appears also in sharing responsibilities for training with enterprises and in trying to incorporate the different forms of company based training and private initiatives into a broad national system. (For the management implications of this tendency see also the section of this study on life-long learning).

2.1.4 THE CHANGES OF THE CONTENT AND THE SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

In most countries not only the way of how responsibilities between different government agencies or between the public authorities and other agencies are distributed is changing but also the content and the scope of these responsibilities is being transformed. There is a general trend to redefine the content and the scope of the responsibility of the state. This is often described, as we have already referred to, simply as decentralisation, or using other terms, as de-concentration, deregulation or power devolution etc. The redefinition of the role of the state means, however, more. The analysis of the international context proves that the aim of the reforms is, in general, not to weaken the state level management of education but to make it more adapted to the complex conditions of education systems and, as a consequence, to make it more efficient. As a result of these reforms the state is probably going to be not weaker than in the past but to fulfil its functions in a different way than before.

Most of the functions the state fulfils in education and training in modern societies are the same as they were in the in the past but they way they are fulfilled is new. A quick look at these functions and the way they tend to be exercised can help our reflection.

☐ Assuring the quality of services. In all democratic countries it is assumed that the state has a general responsibility for assuring the right quality of services, that is for defending the consumers' interests independently of who the provider of the service is. This is a general principle which applies to education similarly to other areas. It is also assumed that this does not require the maintenance of direct control upon all processes of the system or that the state should have a monopoly of provision. The task is to find those instruments or mechanisms which can assure the maintenance of quality without the state intervening directly. The creation of accreditation mechanisms which is typical phenomena in many education systems is, seems to become, such an instrument.

☐ Assuring the equity of provision. In most modern democracies it is an internal constitutional task and also an international obligation of the state to assure the equity of treatment for all citizens and to prevent discrimination. Although the concrete content and the scope of this obligation is under permanent discussion as far as the general principle is concerned there remains a wide consensus. This obliges the state not only to keep a certain level of standardisation within the system but also to take concrete compensatory measures.

☐ Assuring the efficient use of public resources. The state has, in all democracies, an unquestionable responsibility for the good use of the money of taxpayers that is for the efficient use of public resources. This again does not necessarily mean that educational processes have to be directly supervised by state offices but it can imply the establishment of mechanisms which can assure efficiency by themselves in a more or less automatic way. Most of the recent reforms that have tried to introduce market-type competition into education have had this as the main objective.

- Assuring the compatibility of the national system with international standards. With the increasing opening of national labour markets to wider or narrower international markets the responsibility for maintaining the competitiveness of the national labour force falls necessarily onto the state. This is particularly directly felt in the European Union where the removal of obstacles to cross-national mobility of workers has become a legally binding rule. EU member countries are juridically obliged – in a number of key professions – to keep their educational qualifications in line with the EU rules or – in almost all professions – to do the same with their internal system of recognising foreign qualification. This again does not necessarily means direct control by state agencies. The EU model of approaching qualifications is rather based on the encouragement of bilateral mutual agreements concluded often at the institutional level.
- Helping the adaptation of the system to the changing conditions. The state has a logical and, the most frequently, also legal responsibility for helping the adaptation of the education systems to the changing economic and social conditions, which is often described as the responsibility for modernising the system. This again does not mean the need of direct and permanent state intervention. The state tends to create the adaptive capacity of the system through, for instance, supporting research and innovation, making the legal frames more flexible, encouraging linkages between training advanced industries and training institutions or injecting resources into well defined development projects.
- Assuring the internal coherence of the system and its linkages with other social subsystems. The internal coherence of the training system may be threatened by disproportionate development of certain elements of the education and training system, by lack of co-ordination or by other factors. The internal coherence is in danger, for instance, if the vocational training sector is underdeveloped and the formal school system neglects the development of vocational skills. An example of divergence of developments in the different subsystems is, for example, if there is a policy of decentralisation in the field of public administration but the system of educational administration remains centralised.
- Helping the solution of social conflicts. An important function of the state in the area of education and vocational training, similarly to other areas, is the solution of conflicts between the different actors and interest groups or to negotiate between them. Interest conflicts can appear between groups connected with different institutional areas, like general education and vocational training, secondary education and higher education or training institutions and workplaces. The state cannot refuse to enter the scene if the conflict endangers the normal operation of the system. A typical example of this was when, in the late seventies, German companies reduced the number of training places because of financial reasons and this threatened the operation of the dual system. The state played an active role in persuading the companies to continue their involvement in providing training. Conflicts between ethnic and national minorities, which can impede decentralisation policy, may necessitate state intervention.

It is important to reflect also to how the role of the state can be influenced by the process of European integration. The policy of the EU, as defined by the member sates, and the activities of the its supra-national bodies can reduce, at a certain level, the control of national authorities over their own training system. The rights of regions, institutions or individuals as opposed to the rights of the national state can also influence the possibility of the state to determine the operation of the training system.

When over-viewing the main functions of the state as they appear in the recent reforms of educational management we also have to have mention the possible instruments the state can recur to. In fact, in the last decades an interesting reflection, producing new ideas started on this topic. One result of this is the analysis made by Mc. Donell and Elmore (1987) who identified four major types of policy instruments: (1) mandates which are based on (legal) rules and produce compliance, (2) inducements that is money producing value, (3) capacity-building which also requires money and produces new competencies and finally (4) system-changing which requires authority and produces delivery systems.

2.2 The regional (territorial) and local level

For several reasons the regional (territorial) level plays an increasingly important role in the management of education and, particularly, vocational training in many countries.

1. This is often seen as the most appropriate level to match labour market needs and the training outputs of secondary technical/vocational education. In most vocations - especially where training requires costly equipment - it is at the regional level that the quantitative needs for trained labour makes it rational to plan, establish and maintain training institutions. The regional level is particularly favourable for negotiations on quantitative and qualitative training outputs between the representatives of companies and the administration which controls training. The regional level is the most appropriate for training institutions to collect information on needs and to propose new programs. Training institutions with a regional catchment area can enrol a sufficient number of trainees even for special programmes.
2. Different regions within the same country may have very different economic and, consequently labour profiles. Different regions may, therefore, require very different training outputs. Big regional variations exclude rational planning of qualitative and quantitative outputs at national level, or, if planning is made at national level it has to have a regional character.
3. It is at the regional level that the problems of over-specialisation and over-sectorialisation can the better be dealt with. Modern technology may require greater co-operation between different sectors. Many elements of training, for instance in the case of the new information technology, may be very similar in the different economic sectors. In many countries integrated training centres provide high level training for different industrial branches instead of or alongside with separate institutions connected with special industrial branches. While the latter tend to have a national enrolment and, therefore, remain linked to national authorities, the first tend to be organised at the regional level and are linked with regional level funding or administrative agencies.
4. In most countries the planning of general infrastructural development is already

strongly connected to the regional level. If in a country there is a regional planing of infrastructural development education and vocational training comes necessarily into this process or – if this is not the case – the infrastructural development plan itself becomes incomplete. It is important from this point of view to call attention also to the regional development policy of the EU. Many of the developments financed form the EU structural funds directed to particular regions have a human resource or vocational training component which cannot be separated from the overall development plan. In many EU countries training co-financed by the European Social Fund is organised at the regional level by special agencies working under the control of different government agencies and the social partners.

Regional level management may take very different forms of which three major types have to be distinguished:

☐ de-concentrated regional offices of national authorities (type 1)
☐ regional elected political bodies (type 2)
☐ non-political autonomous regional bodies (type 3)

In most countries a combination of these types can be found and responsibilities are shared by them. In many cases there is rivalry between them which again has structural reasons. In France, for instance, part of the responsibility for upper secondary education has been transferred from the regional offices of the Ministry of National Education, the Académies (type 1) to the elected Regional Assemblies (type 2). In Italy there is a similar parallel structure with the Prefects (type 1) whose educational duties are determined by the minister of education and the provincial educational offices subordinated to the elected councils of the Provinces (type 2); The parallel structure of elected bodies (type 2) and territorial government offices (type 1) is typical in the federal countries, like Germany and Austria. After the radical decentralising reforms of the eighties in the Scandinavian countries national ministries of education have kept offices in the regions (counties) with a rather service than administrative function. The Norwegian county level National Education Offices, for instance, are defined as consultative bodies with a quality control function and they have a relative autonomy vis-_-vis the ministry.

In England the character of an already decentralised system was changed when the responsibility for further education colleges was transferred form the Local Education Authorities (type 1) to the independent regional bodies, the 74 Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) which are independent companies (type 3) set up in England and Wales to organise training. These corporate agencies assess the local training needs and ensure that the training offer and the needs of enterprises are meet. They are contracted by the national ministry that is national control and the implementation of national policy is realised without administrative subordination to the national authority. With the money they receive from the national ministry TECs contract schools for training. Through these institutional contracts (covering also the strategic plan of the school) TECs control the institutional sphere again without administrative subordination.

In certain cases different regional administrative arrangements are applied in the field of general education and vocational training. In Norway, for instance, while the agencies responsible for the former are de-concentrated government offices (type 1) and county councils (type 2), in the area of vocational training county level Vocational Training Boards have been set up with the representatives of industry which are non-political corporate bodies (type 3). The Norwegian county Vocational Training Boards are responsible for ensuring that the relevant legislation is observed, approving apprenticeship establishments, administering apprenticeship contracts, inspecting apprenticeship establishments, assessing private practical training and administering examinations.

All arrangements naturally have both advantages and disadvantages.

The de-concentrated offices of national authorities are naturally the best positioned to implement correctly the national policy since they operate under direct government control. Because of their independence of the local interests they are less open to meet local needs. At the same time, they are less exposed to local political precipices and can ensure better professionalism than type 2 but, if they are remote from the centre, they can become less accountable than the two other forms.

Elected local political bodies (type 2) - similarly to non-political autonomous bodies (type 3) - are better connected to local labour market needs that de-concentrated offices but the local political interests can distort their activities. Non-political autonomous bodies are less threatened by politicisation but they do not have the same capacities to raise funds and organise local political support for development that political bodies which dispose of local budgets.

Sometimes the reinforcement of the regional level is used as a tool to encourage the development of an integrated human resources development policy. The enlargement of the responsibilities of territorial agencies leads to integration especially if these bodies are under the control of bodies with representatives of the relevant policy areas (e. g. regional assemblies). It is less advantageous for integration if these agencies remain under the control of national ministries since these latter are often more interested in maintaining control over their particular area than in co-operating with other sectoral administrations.

2.3 The school level

One of the most characteristic international tendencies of educational management at the school level is - emerging in the last two decades - the increase of institutional autonomy. This is again a complex phenomena which cannot be fully analysed here, neither can we consider all implications of it. The changes of the last two decades seem to prove that a real change of paradigm is taking place the long-term consequences of which cannot be estimated yet. With a certain simplification we can formulate the essence of this change in the following way: although historically schools have developed in most countries as parts of a national system operating under the direct control of public authorities and following uniform rules now there is a tendency to give them a new status which is in certain respects similar to that of business organisations. The idea behind this is that increased school level autonomy is a way to improve quality, effectiveness and efficiency, and it can lead to the release of new energies.

The main elements of this change can be summed up as follows:

- ☐ schools become legal persons authorised to enter into contractual relationships with other organisations
- ☐ there is a tendency to see teachers rather as salaried employees or professionals than as public servants taking part in the exercise of public power
- ☐ parents are frequently defined as "consumers" who acquire legally defined rights to influence outputs of the education process
- ☐ schools are often encouraged to take responsibility for their own institutional success by, for instance, through establishing their own institutional strategy or formulating their own "mission" or "projet d'établisssement"

- schools are often made responsible for managing their resources, including building, money, programmes and human resources
- there is a tendency to set up new types of institutional management structures similar to those applied in companies (for instance governing boards representing corporate interests)

The appropriateness of this direction of development is strongly debated but the tendency itself, as characterising the international context of educational management can, however, hardly be denied. There are, in fact, two concurrent concepts of institutional autonomy, the first putting the stress on the professional autonomy of teachers, and the second on the similarity of training institutions and companies as both being led by the market. The first concept seem to prevail in, for instance, Spain where teachers have a decisive role in selecting the head of the school. The second conception has gained ground perhaps the most saliently in England where the opting-out provision of the 1988 Education Act has created a possibility for public institutions to obtain a status similar to that of state supported private institutions (self-governing grant-maintained schools). The English City Technology Colleges, directed by a powerful board of trustees and operating as independent schools, represent even more directly the second concept.

As for the implications of the tendency of enlarging institutional autonomy for the management of the institutions the following can be noted:

- School level definition of goals. Schools are in many countries invited or obliged to formulate their own general and specific goals. This is often made in the form of a formal institutional level document (for example the School Development Plan of English schools or the Projet d'Etablissement of the French ones). These "mission statements" or "institutional projects" are often public documents, accessible to and evaluated by the clientele of the school.
- Responsiveness to the environment. Schools are encouraged to be responsive to their direct social-economic environment. New forms are sought for giving a possibility to parents, the local community or employers to express their needs and to influence the operation of the school. The dependence of the individual school on them increases to the detriment of its dependence on national or local authorities. This has been achieved in a radical way in England where most of the power of the Local Educational Authorities has been transferred to schools by the 1998 Education Act. The establishment of school level consultation or management bodies have been prescribed or recommended in all European countries. In certain countries these bodies have received full or quasi full managerial responsibilities even at lower levels (in England, for instance).
- School level program innovations. Schools are encouraged to develop their own programmes or to adapt the national ones according to the needs they identify. The importance of school level program innovations increases parallel to the growing role of institutional level changes in adapting the training system to the changes of the economic environment.
- New forms of school evaluation. The enlargement of school autonomy is logically accompanied by the increasing importance of external evaluation and the development

of new techniques for this. Institutional autonomy in general means the replacement of the control of inputs by the control of outputs, which leave the freedom to the school to define the way to achieve the externally defined outputs. This is a way to harmonise the responsibility of public authorities for the efficiency and the quality of education and training, on the one hand, and the greater freedom given to schools, on the other. Inspectors or other external evaluators are often invited to look for new methods to evaluate the school as a whole, which means that the stress is transferred form the inspection of the individual subject teacher to that of the whole school organisation. There is a general tendency to professsionalise evaluation and to involve independent actors and agencies into the exercise of evaluation. The quasi privatisation of school inspection in England is a striking example of this.

☐ Increasing organisational complexity. The practice of school level identification of external needs and of adaptation of their organisation and operation to these needs leads to greater organisational complexity. A typical consequence of this is the replacement of one profile institution by multi-functional ones. It is more and more frequent that the same institution takes care of both normal aged pupils and adults, secondary classes and post-secondary courses or general education and vocational training at the same time.

☐ Multilateral dependence. While in the past one institution depended typically from one agency (from the maintaining authority) now they find themselves in a situation of multilateral dependence. While, for instance, in the past they received money in general from one source (the maintaining authority) now they may be financed from several sources. The role of funds distributing money for specific purposes through competitive applications is increasing. This multilateral dependence may even go beyond the national borders in the case, for instance, of schools entering such European projects as SOCRATES or LEONARDO. The financial conditions of schools may increasingly depend on their successes in conceiving and realising particular projects financed through such applications.

☐ Competition between schools. Autonomous schools are invited or compelled to compete with others for clients. The institutional success depends therefore increasingly on their competitive capacities. The English model of allowing public institutions to leave the public sphere (opting out) and to operate as independent institutions exposed to market effects is again a relevant example.

☐ New management competencies. The management of an autonomous institution in a competitive environment requires new management capacities and competencies which are different from those needed in the past. The management of school level resources, including finances, makes it necessary, for instance, to develop specific competencies and organisational conditions. Competition and the exposure to a dynamic environment which conveys necessarily contradictory demands towards the school lead to conflicts which calls attention to the need for conflict solving capacity. The growing dependence on local and industrial interest-relations makes it necessary that school leaders possess, beyond their professional capacities, the capability to handle complex social/political situations.

☐ Co-operative leadership. The requirement of institutional level adaptability leads logically to the change of leadership styles. Institutional changes, especially the creation of linkages between the different programme elements in case of school level programme innovations requires collective involvement and intensive co-operation within the teaching staff. Decisions are increasingly taken through consultation within the staff which demands co-operative institutional level leadership.

- ☐ New management structures. The conditions of autonomy, especially the need to communicate with the environment and the growing dependence on it leads to the emergence of new management structures which is often encouraged also by national legislation. One of the most important developments form this point of view is the creation or revitalisation of institutional level boards consisting of the representatives of local or industrial stakeholders with consultative or governing responsibilities.
- ☐ Management development. Since the quality of management becomes a decisive factor in the efficient work of the institution the development of management through training receives greater attention. In many countries new forms of educational management training have been developed and greater resources have been devoted to management training programmes.
- ☐ New support mechanisms. If schools are supposed to formulate goals, to elaborate techniques for achieving these goals and to assess the effectiveness of their activities they need more external support. The role of support institutions or mechanisms like pedagogical advising, documentation, in-service training for staff is, therefore, increasing. In certain countries there are new legislative provisions for educational support services. In the Netherlands, for instance, a separate act was adopted in 1987 which has defined the institutional frameworks of educational support services and regulated their operation and their relationships with schools.

2.4 Actors involved in management

The analysis presented in the previous sections shows that responsibility for vocational education and training is shared between many actors (bodies or agencies) which operate at different levels (national, regional, local) and which have different legal status (public authorities, institutes, representative bodies etc.). A rough analysis of European comparative data has revealed at least eleven different types of agencies which can have a role in managing the system vocational education and training. In certain cases the classification of a given organisation or agency into one of the following categories may be disputable, but the identification of the these categories undoubtedly can help us to understand how the distribution of managerial responsibilities for education and training varies across Europe.

1. Ministries of education. Ministries of education have a natural role in the managing of initial vocational education and training in all European countries.

2. Ministries of employment. Ministries of employment or labour have a responsibility for continuous training in most countries but in many of them they have a role in the area of initial training as well. In a few countries however (Austria, for example) the competence of the employment administration has remained very restricted, that is the area of initial vocational training does not come at all under their jurisdiction. England

is the only European country where the ministerial level administrations of education and employment have been merged.

3. Other branch ministries. In most countries different branch ministries (trade, industry, agriculture) play a role in organising or financing training in their particular area. In Portugal, for instance, there are training programmes supported by the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture. In Greece several ministries organise training schools (merchant navy, nursing, agriculture, tourism etc.) on a sectoral basis. In Austria the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry maintain sectoral schools although the federal ministry responsible for education possess the general educational competencies in connection with them.

4. Inter-ministerial bodies. In certain countries different ministries form an inter-ministerial body with a role in vocational training. In France, for instance, an inter-ministerial committee sets guidelines on priority training programmes, particularly for those unemployed.

5. Government level agencies/offices. In many European countries special government level authorities, generally subordinated to one ministry are set up with the task of implementing training policy or managing and organising courses. The French National Employment Agency, the Irish Training and Employment Authority, The Flemish Office for Employment and Training, the Danish National Labour-Market Authority or the Greek Organisation for Vocational Education and Training are typical examples. These agencies or offices are subordinated in most cases to the ministry of employment or labour. In Greece, for instance, where the above mentioned Organisation for Vocational Education and Training operates under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education and Religion there is another national level agency, the Manpower Employment Organisation which is controlled by the Ministry of Labour.

6. National institutes. In a number of countries national level institutes have been established for vocational education and training. Some of them are responsible for such tasks as programme development, but many of them directly organise training courses. A well known example is the German Federal Institute of Vocational Training. Similar examples are the Italian Institute for the development of vocational training for workers (ISFOL), the Spanish National Employment Institute (INEM) or the Greek Vocational Training Institute, the Belgian Institute de Formation Permanente pour les Classes Moyennes et les PMEs (French speaking community) or the Flemish Self-employment Institute.

7. Tripartite or other multi-side bodies. Tripartite bodies, consisting of the representatives of the government, the employers and the labour unions appear at the national, regional/local or institutional level in practically all European countries. The Spanish General Council on Vocational Training, the French regional vocational training committees, the Danish Training Advisory Council or the British Business and Technology Education Council are typical examples. Sometimes the representation is broader than the three main partners. In the governing board of the Greek

Organisation for Vocational Education and Training, for instance, not only the social partners can negotiate with each others but also the different ministries, including the Ministry of Finance. Bodies consisting of the representatives of the main "stakeholders" may have enlarged or restricted responsibilities. The British National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) is, for instance, responsible for standards and qualifications. In many cases the already mentioned national agencies or institutes operate under the control of tripartite boards, like the Irish Training and Employment Authority or the German Federal Institute for Vocational Training. Tripartite bodies appear at both the national and regional/local level.

8. Sectoral bodies, professional associations, chambers. Bodies representing definite professional areas play a role particularly in the definition of the content of training and in qualification in most countries and in many of them they are directly involved in providing training. In the Netherlands, for instance, the apprenticeship system is co-ordinated by 31 national independent professional/sectarian associations or foundations which are responsible for producing syllabuses and supervising apprentices in the work- place. In Denmark 85 trade committees decide on the content and structure of vocational courses. In Germany the different chambers (industry, agriculture commerce, independent professions etc.) are responsible for advising, supervising and recognising vocational education at the level of the Länder. In many countries professional chambers organise training themselves. If the tripartite bodies, mentioned in the previous paragraph, are organised on a sectoral basis, the employer side generally consist of the representatives of professional chambers or associations. The City and Guilds of London Institute which has traditionally had a key role in vocational certification in Britain can also be classified into this category.

9. Regional authorities/offices. Regional authorities having a role in vocational education and training may belong to two different types. On the one hand they may be the regional units of the national level administration, that is the territorial offices of different ministries. On the other hand, they may be elected bodies, that is regional assemblies, councils or self-governments. In Italy the autonomous provinces plan and finance vocational training. In France the elected regional assemblies have had, since the first half of the eighties, an increasing role in providing and developing vocational education but the responsibility remains shared with the regional offices (Academies) subordinated to the Ministry of National Education. In Spain the Autonomous Communities play an important role but the Ministry of Education and Science also has Provincial Directorates in those Communities which do not have full powers in education. In Belgium (in the French speaking community) the management power is being transferred from the regional offices of training and employment to the elected regional assemblies. In Greece the Ministry of Labour has largely decentralised to Regional Councils the responsibility for the use of EU funds. In the federal countries of Germany and Austria there are parallel regional administrative structures: the provincial governments, on the one hand, and the provincial offices of the national ministry, on the other, share responsibilities.

10. Municipalities. Although municipalities are active typically in the provision of primary or lower secondary education in certain countries they – especially larger,

urban municipalities – may also have a role in vocational education and training. This is typically the case in those countries, like Sweden or Finland, where vocational training can take place within integrated upper secondary schools run by municipalities and where municipalities play a decisive role also in providing for adult education. A recent example of giving competencies in vocational training at post-secondary level to municipalities is given by the 1993 act on Fachhochshule in Austria. Larger urban municipalities may unite locally the functions of elected regional authorities and territorial state offices (as it has been distinguished in the previous paragraph), like the Austrian capital Vienna.

11. Autonomous institutions. Training may be provided by autonomous institutions owned by private or public bodies and controlled often by boards consisting of the representatives of the social partners. The British further education colleges which are public institutions but operate under local corporate control provide a typical example of this model. The same model has been applied in Austria by the 1993 act on Fachhochshule.

3. RECENT CHALLENGES

3.1 Life-long learning and its management implications

The impact of rapid technological changes and, especially, the latest developments of labour markets have recently directed the attention of international agencies and national governments to the question of life-long education. An intensive work aiming at operationalising this idea has started as it is reflected for instance by the last ministerial level OECD Education Committee meeting in January 1996. It is not our task to explore the meaning (or meanings) of life-long learning but we have to call attention to the possible management implications of the expected developments.

The following question has to be raised first: how far the existing forms of management and administration are encouraging or hindering the intended movement towards the new and more flexible forms of learning. It is clear that this movement may be blocked or slowed down by the rigidities of the system of management. The rigid adherence to the traditional institutional forms, the maintenance of bureaucratic and clumsy authorisation processes or simply the lack of management creativity may put serious obstacles to the transformation of learning.

The second, closely related question is this: what kind of new forms of management are to be developed in order to ensure quality, reliability and accountability if teaching, learning and the validation of competencies take place in a more flexible and open environment. Openness and flexibility cannot be realised if this is accompanied by deteriorating quality, loss of reliability and lack of accountability.

If a growing part of learning takes place outside the formal school system, if new alternative forms of learning gain ground, this logically means that the present relationship between public and market-led institutions will change, in favour of the latter. If a new market of learning emerges, the role of public authorities will have to be redefined. This does not mean the reduction of the role of public authorities but it implies the redefinition of objectives and the identification of possible new instruments. Public authorities will have to fulfil responsibility for protecting the consumers' interest, informing users, assuring the fairness of competition, transparency and equity, solving conflicts and inciting development. Markets of learning need not only more deregulated environment but also appropriate public regulation.

The government policies and the management frameworks which are appropriate for the development of life-long learning remain to be elaborated. Only the first steps are being made, among which the following an be mentioned:

☐ the removal of the legal barriers and administrative structures that prevent secondary and higher education institutions to turn towards the new markets of learning and to offer flexible types of post-secondary courses for an enlarged clientele
☐ the opening of new pathways for learning within and outside the formal school system through encouraging private training initiatives, legalising and recognising new learning forms
☐ the establishment of general rules for acquiring qualifications which allows training institutions or private persons outside the formal system to certify skills and competencies with similar conditions as within the formal system
☐ creating management structures which open possibilities for industry to take part in defining the orientation of teaching through, for instance, the establishment of institutional level governing bodies with the participation of the representatives of industry
☐ the reinforcement of educational and training elements in employment policies through directing a greater part of labour market resources to training and giving new training competencies to employment agencies
☐ the reinforcement of linkages between education and employment by, for instance, encouraging secondary and higher education institutions to establish direct contacts with economic organisations through special programmes (like the COMMETT programme of the European Union) and, parallel to this, making the legal environment favourable for the participation in such programmes
☐ introducing new information and telecommunication technologies into education which open learning to the external world

3.2 The European integration and its implications for educational management

We have already referred several times to the possible management implications of the participation of countries in the process of European integration. Since the Treaty of Rome the European Communities have had an explicit role in the area of vocational training and this has been reinforced by the Maastricht Treaty. According to this the European Union is entitled to "implement vocational training policy which shall support the action of the Member States.". Although the common policy cannot mean the harmonisation of training systems (this goal is excluded by the Maastricht Treaty), it does set a number of constraints which may have a direct impact on the development of the management of European educational and training systems.

These constraints may appear in the following forms:

- ☐ The decisions of the European Court show that there is a tendency to conceive teachers as workers or professionals rather that public officers. The fact that teachers will have the similar rights to move from one country to another may have serious implications on personnel management.
- ☐ According to EU norms, also sanctioned by European Court decisions, access to training will have to be assured for people from other EU member countries on a similar basis as for people in the home country. This may have implications on the regulation of admittance to training institutions.
- ☐ In a limited number of vocational areas (recognised professions) there are European agreements on the content of training while in other areas (regulated professions) the national regulation of recognition has to follow common European rules. This necessarily puts a limit on the competence of national authorities in defining and assessing requirements for qualification.
- ☐ One of the greatest challenges, which has already led to conflicts of competencies between the member states and the European Commission, is related to the participation of institutions in EU programmes like ERASMUS or LEONARDO. By the acceptance of these programmes the national authorities are forced to create appropriate administrative conditions for their schools and training institutions to join the common activities. This unavoidably leads to changes in power-relations between the authorities and the institutions in favour of the latter.
- ☐ EU policies embodied in actions, programmes and rules may alter the traditional power-relations between the different actors having influence on education and training. For instance the fact, that the many EU programmes encourage the establishment of direct linkages between schools and industry necessarily leads to a growing role of the latter even in those countries where this has traditionally not been the case.
- ☐ Professional associations which are more organised at the European level may see their importance growing to the detriment of those which are not.
- ☐ Although the EU is not entitled to harmonise education and training systems, the simple fact that national systems become more open to international comparisons can lead to the need to re-evaluate certain national patterns, including management models.

These examples show that if the integration process goes further, we can expect the power of the national authorities being somehow narrowed in a number of areas. This is, naturally, an uncompleted process, which may take different directions according to the current and future wishes of the member states. It is, nevertheless, clear that its implications have to be assessed carefully when designing the educational management system of a country which intends to become the member of EU.

THE FINANCING OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN EUROPE: AN EXAMINATION OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Jean-Pierre JALLADE

1. BACKGROUND

In most Central and Eastern European countries, the public budget is faced with increasing constraints that have an adverse effect on the financing of vocational education and training (VET for short). There is not enough government money to run and equip existing training schools and centres properly and hardly any funds for financing innovations qualitatively. The newly-privatised companies are engaged in a difficult process of adaptation and are unable to maintain the old company schools which are devolved to the public sector.

Under such difficult circumstances, it is of crucial importance to innovate in the area of VET financing. Diversification of the sources of financing must be actively pursued in the form of co-financing arrangements between central governments, local authorities, employers and workers, without neglecting foreign support. At the same time, efforts must be made to improve the efficiency and the quality of the public VET sector.

In the area of VET financing there is no unique and ideal scheme valid for all countries at all stages of economic development. EU countries themselves differ widely in terms of their financial arrangements for VET, depending on their political, administrative and economic traditions. Care must also be taken to differentiate proposals according to target groups, namely initial VET for young people, continuing VET for the employed and re-training for the unemployed. Different solutions must be tailored to the specific training needs of each of these groups, as well as to their ability to contribute to the financing of their training.

The objective of this paper is to review the most significant policy developments which are implemented internationally in the area of VET financing. Stress will be placed on the experiences of EU countries. The paper is part of a wider effort to draft a policy document for VET in the Czech Republic. As such, it does not purport to give the Czech Republic a "ready-to-use" solution, but to provide the Working Group on the financing of VET with an array of financing mechanisms which have been tested internationally, together with some evaluation of their positive effects as well as of their limitations.

The paper is divided into two parts. Firstly, the financing mechanisms designed to improve the efficiency and quality of VET in the public sector will be reviewed. This part is justified on the grounds that VET is, at present, predominantly financed from public funds and may remain so in the years to come despite the efforts made to diversify the sources of financing. Second, alternatives sources of financing stressing co-financing arrangements involving employers, local authorities and trainees, will be explored.

2. IMPROVING EFFICIENCY AND QUALITY IN THE PUBLIC VET SECTOR

Improving quality and efficiency in the public VET sector can be achieved by decentralising the management of VET and by introducing market mechanisms and private management techniques. In connection to this, the following initiatives are being implemented in various EU countries:

- Decentralising the administration of VET to local government authorities (regions or provinces) in order to mobilise local tax revenue for training and to improve the match between training and labour market needs. Policies of this kind are implemented in Southern European countries such as Spain, Italy and France.
- Making public providers of VET responsive to market forces by exposing them to competition from other providers and cutting public contribution to their budget. This point will be illustrated by examples from France and Sweden.
- Privatising the management of public funds for VET is a course of action actively pursued in the United Kingdom which has set up about 80 TECs (Training Enterprise Councils) to manage public VET programmes at the local level. These TECs are local private bodies run by employers.
- Granting budgetary autonomy to schools and/or training institutions and allocating public funds to them according to normative procedures designed to ensure (i) transparency and (ii) accountability. Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are illustrations of this policy. Improvement in quality and efficiency are achieved by.

1) efforts to rationalise the provision of training by increasing the size of training institutions and diversifying their clientele; and

2) attempts to shift from input- to output-related funding, stressing the outcomes of training.

- Strengthening the individual consumer's choice for VET by means of voucher schemes, training credits or career development loans granted to individuals to enable them to pay for training adapted to their needs. By shifting public funds away from providers of training to consumers or users, this policy is credited with a positive impact on the match between training and work.

These five courses of action will now be reviewed in turn.

2.1 Decentralising the management of VET to local government authorities

In some European countries where the management of the VET sector used to be very centralised, there has been a decisive move towards decentralisation of the VET sector to the intermediate/local government level. Apart from the overall political objective of these reforms, their rationale was to mobilise additional public funds for VET and to improve the match between training and work.

In Spain, the provinces (Communidades autonomas) are gradually becoming major actors in the financing and the management of the VET sector, either through financial transfers from the central government, or by devoting an increasing proportion of their own tax revenue to VET. Provincial governments take on greater responsibilities in sector management and policies. In a few years, the central government will cease to hold other responsibilities than information, quality control and curriculum design, since the country will have adopted the management structure of a federal state.

In Italy, the management and the financing of the VET sector are shared between the central government, which formally runs the initial VET (technical and vocational schools), and the regions, which were given overall responsibility in 1978 for all other forms of VET: apprenticeship training, labour market training for school-leavers, training of the unemployed, employment-training contracts etc. Within each region, the delivery of courses is managed directly by the regional government or delegated to associations, provinces or municipalities. Appropriate financial agreements are elaborated in each case. Some dynamic regions, such as Emilia-Romagna, have taken full advantage of the 1978 law to implement vigorous VET policies designed for the specific needs for qualified labour of SMEs, to strengthen partnerships with employer associations and to disseminate good practice. Other regions, less endowed with flourishing small companies, are doing less well. Although this process of regionalisation is not yet completed, the regions are making significant contributions to overall VET financing. Regional expenditure on VET represents about one third of central government expenditure on technical/vocational schools. It is also believed that the process of regionalisation has encouraged private companies to enter into co-financing agreements with regional bodies for VET.

In France, a process of regionalisation of VET was initiated in the 1970s and accelerated by the two laws of 1983 and 1993. The 1983 law entrusted elected regional authorities with the responsibility for apprenticeship and continuing training programmes. These authorities are expected to prepare every year a regional programme of training activities, to enter into contracting agreements with training institutions for the various courses and to pay for the trainees'remuneration. The 1983 law also established Regional Funds for Vocational Training, financed jointly by state transfers (40% of the total) and by regional taxes (60%), with full autonomy granted to the regions over the allocation of resources. As far as initial VET is concerned (the technical and vocational schools), regional authorities were given responsibility for investment in and equipment of all secondary schools, but other operating expenditure remained under the authority of the Ministry of

Education.

In 1993, the regionalisation process went one step further by granting the responsibility for defining policy orientations to the regions in the four main training areas, namely vocational schools, continuing education for 16-25 year-olds, apprenticeship and employment-training contracts. Three major objectives were defined, i. e. (i) strengthening cohesion of training programmes, (ii) ensuring transparency of the training system and (iii) quality of the training supply. To meet these objectives, the powers of the Regional Committees for Employment and Training (COREF) were strengthened. Furthermore, the Co-ordinating Committee of regional training programmes, set up in 1983, was given extensive responsibility for evaluating these programmes. Its first activity report , covering the 1993-96 period is now available (Comité de Coordination 1996). The practice of contractual arrangements between the state and the regions and social partners to implement specific VET programmes became widespread, thus contributing to its flexibility and transparency.

The impact of the regionalisation process on the financing of VET in France has been assessed in the following terms (Lichtenberger, 1993): "The take over by the regions of programmes which were up to now the State's responsibility will not create additional resources and the funds available for the training of unemployed people cannot increase at the same rate as during recent years. But a better linkage between these programmes and the whole system of initial and continuing vocational training should contribute to a more optimal use of the funds."

There is a widespread agreement that these three experiments in decentralising VET management and financing, (although partially since only VET activities other than technical/vocational schools for 16-19 year-olds which are still impregnated by the centralised "culture" of education ministries are fully decentralised), have produced a number of positive effects. Firstly, regions are prepared to contribute to the financing of VET with their own funds in accordance with their capacity to raise tax revenue, thus complementing central government financing. Secondly, by bringing decision-makers closer to clients (companies) and beneficiaries (young people and adults), regional decentralisation contributes to more effective VET provision and to a better match with labour market needs. At the regional level, the institutional connection between training and employment is more effective than at the national level. Third, regional decentralisation does facilitate the involvement of other players, most notably companies, in the financing of VET. Experience shows that the private sector is readier to enter into co-financing mechanisms when training schemes are designed, financed and implemented with tangible results at the local level. External, i. e. EU, support through the regional and structural funds are also available for disadvantaged regions throughout the EU.

The decentralisation process may, however, sometimes have unintended, negative effects, however. Regional inequality in the provision of VET may widen as reliance on regional funds increases. There is some justified concern about this in Italy and Spain. Inconsistencies in curriculum and VET qualifications among regions may also arise in the absence of appropriate co-ordinating bodies at the national level. But, by and large, decentralisation seems to have an overall positive effect on both the level of financing available for VET, and the effectiveness of VET expenditure.

2.2 Making public providers of VET responsive to market forces

In the past, labour market training, that is training for the employed and the unemployed, used to be provided by a single, powerful public agency, usually under the umbrella of the Ministry of Labour. Such were the French AFPA, the British MSC or the Swedish AMU to name but a few. These organisations had a quasi-monopoly over the financing or the provision of labour market training and used to be rather centralised. They were grant-financed and resource allocation was based on administrative regulations.

Recent reforms have been directed at making these public providers responsive to market forces. Exposing them to competition would force them to be more flexible, to adjust course offerings to the needs of clients, to offer high quality training at competitive prices and to use their (mostly public) resources more efficiently.

In the United Kingdom, the reform was fairly radical. The old MSC no longer exists. Its combined employment and training role were separated in 1987 and it became a diminished Training Commission, then renamed as the Training Agency of the Department of Employment. Then, the establishment of a network of about 100 Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) was proposed in 1989. These were decentralised, private organisations, managed by employers. They became operational in 1991, thus replacing the old Area Manpower Boards.

By contrast, the reform of AFPA, the public, tripartite agency responsible for the retraining of adults in France, was far more cautious. In 1994, AFPA signed with the Ministry of Labour a contractual, four-year (1994-98) agreement aimed at rationalising, decentralising and diversifying its activities (AFPA 1994). In addition to its traditional mission of public provider of training for the low-skilled unemployed, AFPA is expected to develop its supply of training for employed adults in the private sector. It will no longer be fully subsidised by the state and encouraged to sell its services to complement the subsidy received from the state.

From now on, the public funds allocated to AFPA will be computed on the basis of normative unit costs, showing productivity increases every year. More autonomy will be granted in all areas, and especially in personnel management. The decentralisation of decisions at the regional level and expenditure control ex post will be implemented as soon as the necessary management tools are developed.

The reform of the Swedish system took place in two steps (Noonan and Söderberg 1994). In 1986, the AMU group was established as an autonomous organization with responsibility for supplying publicly subsidised training. It was decentralised in 24 county offices enjoying a high degree of independence under the supervision of their tripartite boards. Training is provided by some 110 AMU Skill Centres throughout the country.

The provision of training services is in the hands of the 24 LANs (Country Labour Market Boards) who receive an annual budget for the payment of training services. The LANs pay for those services, on the basis of lowest price for acceptable quality, from AMU centres, secondary schools, colleges, universities, private training institutions and industry. AMU centres must, therefore, compete with other providers and its share of labour market training has declined; but on the other hand, they can offer training to other customers. As a result, AMU's involvement in corporate training has increased very sharply and it is now almost entirely financed by revenues from training services.

In1993, proposals were made to transform the AMU group into a corporate organization, state-owned at least at the outset, which would be in line with its operating procedures as a business exposed to competition. The possibility of partial privatisation by opening the participation of private interests was envisaged.

These three examples illustrate the efforts made in various countries to introduce market forces in the provision of labour market training. The institutional panorama has not yet stabilised, as policy-makers are still groping for the optimal organization of VET provision that would ensure efficiency, quality and opportunity.

2.3 Privatising the management of public funds for VET

This is, in essence, the policy course adopted by the United Kingdom. In 1979, the management of government training programmes was entrusted to decentralised tripartite bodies, the AMBs (Area Manpower Boards), set up by the national training agency, the Manpower Services Commission. The move responded to the same concern for a local match between training and work as observed in the countries mentioned above. In 1991, the AMBs were replaced by a network of 82 TECs (Training and Enterprise Councils) covering England and Wales and 22 LECs (Local Enterprise Companies) for Northern Ireland. The TEC/LECs are independent bodies, financed by the government, but managed by employers. They are responsible for providing the main government training programmes, that is, essentially, the YT (Youth Training) for school-leavers aged 16 to18 and looking for work, and the TFW (Training For Work) for unemployed adults aged 18 to 59. In 1993-94, the total amount of public funds granted to the TECs was around _ 2.4 billion, three-quarters of which were devoted to the YT and the TFW.

There are major differences between the AMBs and the TECs. The former were decentralised public bodies managed by tripartite Boards, while the latter are fully private and run by employers. The source of financing is the same; both are financed from public funds. But the management has been put in private, i. e. employers' hands. The reform reflected two major beliefs of the British authorities, firstly the conviction that the TECs will be more effective if they are run by employers and second, the expectation that private industry will be willing to contribute to the overall VET effort by means of co-financing arrangements.

The government is steering the system through the TOAs (TEC Operating Agreements), which are conventions signed between each TEC and the Employment Department (Ministry of Labour). The TOA stipulates some compulsory and optional objectives for each TEC, as well as its budget which is based on normative unit costs established for the YT and TFW programmes. A rather complicated system of points enables the TEC to obtain additional premiums for positive results, that is trainees effectively obtaining the qualification. It is believed that the role of ORF (Output Related Funding) will grow in the future.

In addition, the TECs may request premiums related to performance, which are granted for training initiatives directed at specific, disadvantaged groups or for projects of strategic interest. These initiatives and/or projects are assessed by means of a system of points which offers the possibility of receiving the premiums. Some PRF (Performance related Funding) activities are compulsory; others are not.

Once the TOA between the TEC and the Employment Department is approved, together with its budget, the TEC is free to sign contracts with public and private providers of training who may be private employers, Colleges of Further Education, local authorities, non-profit bodies,... etc., as long as they comply with the norms of ATO (Approved Training Organisations) published by the Employment Department.

It is probably too early to assess the results of the TECs system, either quantitatively or qualitatively, but concern is already arising about some negative effects of a budgeting system which does not take sufficiently into account the type of training provided and the characteristics of trainees. In order to obtain good results, the TECs are, thus, encouraged to concentrate on "easy" or "heap" fields of training, or to select "good" trainees who stand a great chance of obtaining their qualifications. ORF may not be the panacea which many thought it would be.

Doubts are also expressed about the ability of the TEC system to mobilise additional private funds for VET. It seems that British employers are happy with their managerial functions, but not ready to complement public funds with companies' contributions in any significant way. They may be encouraged by the attitude of the government whose main concern is to obtain good value for money, rather than to implement a fully-fledged VET policy.

2.4 Granting budgetary autonomy to school and training institutions

In several Northern European countries, the decentralisation of VET was achieved by granting full autonomy to schools rather than by devolving management responsibilities to local education authorities, the expectation being that schools are in a better position to use the resources put at their disposal in the most effective way. This policy course was illustrated by the decision taken in April 1993 to remove the 400 or so British FE colleges from the control of LEAs (Local Education Authority). The colleges became independent entities, a process known as "incorporation."

This move was accompanied by various initiatives aimed at strengthening VET schools management and at amalgamating small schools into larger, often multi-campus units capable of providing a diversified array of training activities for young people and adults alike. Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom embarked on a process of amalgamation which culminated during the first half of the 1990s. In those countries, it is not untypical to find "technical colleges" employing between 300 and 500 teachers with enrolments over the 3,000 mark. By their large size, these institutions are able to provide training courses of different types and duration.

These colleges are independent entities, mostly financed from public funds, usually complemented by a limited amount of private funding in the form of fees charged to adult trainees and training contracts undertaken for companies. Public funds are allocated to them on the basis of financial norms reflecting the unit costs of "good practice", or more simply past levels of funding. Several Central/Eastern European countries have adopted this system in order to achieve transparency and accountability in allocating public funds to schools.

As in the case of the TEC system, the norms sometimes include premiums for results and/or quality. Thus, in 1993, the British FEFC (Further Education Funding Council) issued a methodology to fund Further Education Colleges which was based on "units" granted when students are enrolled, when they complete the course and when they obtain their qualification. Failure to do so leads to a decrease in the number of units, leading to cuts in the funds received by colleges which are, therefore, strongly encouraged to increase retention and graduation rates.

Although the FEFC methodology has been in operation for only two years, some results are clear (Atkinson 1996). There has been a strong expansion in student numbers in response to a system which has sometimes been called "an open-ended invitation to grow." Competition among colleges to attract students for initial VET and adults for retraining is strong, as colleges have invested in promotion and marketing activities. Although it is too early to asses the extent to which they have been successful in increasing retention and obtaining of qualifications, the pressure to increase and equalise efficiency, a process known as convergence, is felt everywhere in the FE system. On the other hand, the FEFC funding system may have another effect. Since the major risk for college funding is poor retention, colleges may concentrate on enrolling students in VET programmes that will encourage them to stay.

The normative per capita funding system may have quite different effects in another context. In Central/Eastern European countries, where no government initiative to amalgamate VET schools have been taken, funding schools on the basis of unit costs and student numbers may lead to a multiplication of small, often private and single-sector schools, unable to offer the variety of courses required to enhance student choice. Fragmentation of VET provision, rather than concentration into larger schools, may be the unintended effect of normative per capita funding. Furthermore, in a context of rapidly declining age cohorts, using student numbers as a basis for allocating public funds, may encourage over-capacity leading to the wasting of scarce resources.

2.5 Strengthening the individual consumer's choice in the VET sector

The overall objective pursued by the various attempts to increase the consumer's choice in the VET sector is to shift from a supply-driven approach, whereby VET providers are funded, to a demand-driven approach, whereby the choice of training is left to the users or beneficiaries. The underlying rationale is that the supply of training has become over the years overly rigid and/or bureaucratic, and therefore, wasteful. Relying on the demand, that is funding the potential users of training facilities instead of the providers is, therefore, expected to have a positive effect on the match between training and work.

In the area of continuing training, most OECD countries have established schemes for paid training leave. The objective of these schemes is to stimulate employed adults to undertake training by providing them with opportunities for training leaves made available under certain conditions.

In France, the principles of training leave were laid down in 1966 and established by the 1971 law, but the financing mechanisms only became operational in 1984. The law stipulates the following: "The right to individual training leave is intended to allow every employee, during his/her working life, upon his/her request and on an individual basis, to take part in courses irrespective of his/her participation in the training activities of the training plan organized by the enterprise."

The training leave is financed by the employers' contribution to the financing of continuing training at the level of 0.2% of the payroll for those who employ at least ten people. The number of beneficiaries is about 50.000 people a year, a small figure when compared to a potential target group of 12 million wage-earners. The limited success of the individual training leave stands in sharp contrast to the extremely rapid development of continuing training organized and financed by companies under the tax-exemption scheme set up in 1971 (see below 3.2.2.).

In the United Kingdom, a system of Youth Credit was established to strengthen the consumer's choice in the VET sector. This is essentially a voucher for training and education available to all 16 and 17 year old school leavers. It carries a nominal face value of _1000 - _2000 and can "buy" VET from colleges, employers and private training providers. Its aim is to:

☐ stimulate the demand for training
☐ fund the learners, not the providers
☐ increase efficiency on the market
☐ empower and motivate individuals to invest in training

In possession of the Youth Credit, the trainee, helped by professional guidance and counselling, is supposed to negotiate a suitable VET programme for himself. Although many evaluation studies of the Youth Credit scheme are available, it is difficult to draw definite conclusions. Sceptics (Coopers & Lybrand, 1994) argue that:

- ☐ vouchers have contributed little as of yet to the creation of informed purchasers on the demand side of the VET market
- ☐ vouchers may not lead to any significant increases in "shopping around" by young people before choosing their training providers
- ☐ vouchers have not brought about a situation in which most young people either seek to exercise or succeed in exercising greater influence over their training than did their predecessors in non-voucher schemes

In short, the introduction of YCs seems to have little significant impact on training supply which continues to respond to labour market demand, as driven by employers and the TECs themselves, rather than by young people. This is indeed a key point, perhaps overlooked by the political commitment to market-driven systems that prevailed in the UK during the 1980s and the early 1990s. Whose demand? Employers' or young people's? The extent to which young people stated career preferences should take preference over labour market needs is in any case open to doubt (Atkinson, 1996).

Indeed, the individualist market model, although superficially attractive, stands little chance to compete successfully with companies' pressing needs for trained labour. This conclusion echoes the comment made earlier about the French situation where continuing education within the framework of companies' training plans developed considerably faster than the individual training leave.

Another scheme, Career Development Loans (CDLs), was set up as part of the British Government's strategy to "empower" individuals on the VET market and to motivate them to take the lead in their own training and development. CDLs were piloted in four areas of the United Kingdom in 1986 and extended nationally in 1988. By the end of 1991/92, some 26,500 loans, of which more than half were used to support full-time study in occupational areas where the labour market demand was strong (computer skills, management, health and welfare) had been approved. It is not yet clear how far demand for CDLs may increase, or at what point it may become saturated and level off (Fairley, 1994).

3. INTRODUCING CO-FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS INVOLVING THE PRIVATE SECTOR

3.1 Increasing the role of apprenticeship in overall VET provision

In many European countries, there is an old tradition of apprenticeship which combines school-based and company-based training in varying proportions, depending on the type of training. The German dual system is the most important and probably the best organized apprenticeship system in Europe. The costs of apprenticeship training are also shared between the companies, which supply training places, equipment, and trainers' time on the one hand, and Länder-funded vocational schools where young people receive additional general and technical training on the other.

With over 1,5 million apprentices enrolled in courses lasting between 2.5 and 3.5 years, the German "dual system", as it is usually called, is a "mass system" providing places to about 60% of the relevant age group. The share of public financing is limited to the support of the Berufschulen attended by apprentices on a part-time basis, ranging from one day to three days per week at most. German industry finances the costs of in-company training, as well as a number of "hidden" costs borne by the Chambers to control the training that takes place in companies' workshops and training centres and to set up the examination juries. The industry is also heavily involved in the design of course programmes by the BIBB, thus contributing with time and expertise to the effectiveness of the system.

It is difficult to assess the exact amount contributed by German industry to the financing of the dual system because some of the costs, for instance the use of companies' equipment by apprentices or the trainers' time, are "sunk" costs, that is part of the production costs of the company. According to estimates provided by German employers, supporting the dual system amounts to 2 or 3% of the total salary costs of the industry. Although these figures are sometimes questioned by trade unions on the grounds that they are inflated, there is little doubt that the contribution of the private sector to the financing of the dual system is substantial. As a consequence, the amount of public finance required to provide VET to the 17-20 year-olds is far less in Germany than in countries where initial VET is provided in technical/vocational schools, the costs of which are fully borne by the government budget.

The willingness of German industry to finance initial VET is usually explained by traditions, but the desire of German employers to control the quality of training also play an important part. The old principle whereby "he who pays is in a position to control" also apply to the dual system. In recent years, however, there have been periods, when the private sector has been unwilling to provide training places in sufficient numbers to accommodate all applicants. In the mid-1980s, the Federal government almost threatened the industry with setting up an apprenticeship tax if additional places were not provided. The Government also took some initiatives to subsidise training places for "difficult" groups (children from ethnic minorities, low-achievers, ... etc.) who were unable to find places by themselves. At present, the dual system is under pressure for the same reasons. Faced with an economic recession, coupled with the imperative to cut costs to increase competitiveness, German companies may be tempted to cut training costs first, thus threatening the long-term viability of the dual system.

Can the German system be reproduced in other European countries? This question was debated at length in a number of EU countries during the 1980s. A crucial issue is whether industry is willing and/or capable to shoulder part of the costs of the initial training presently borne by the government budget. Obviously, this cannot be done overnight and the resistance to alter the present status quo is strong. Yet, various EU countries have taken significant steps to increase the role of apprenticeship in overall VET provision in an attempt to mobilise private resources for initial training. France and the Netherlands are among the EU countries which have implemented explicit policies of apprenticeship development during the last fifteen years. Thus, the Dutch government decided to double the annual intake of young people into apprenticeship during the 1980s. Following negotiations with employers' associations and a vigorous advertising campaign, the number of apprentices in France has been increasing steadily since 1992. These steps were part of an ambitious policy to modernise apprenticeship training and to bring this form of training on par with other training routes.

In Central/Eastern European countries, the difficulties arising from the economic transition have led to a decrease, rather than an increase, in the contribution of industry to initial training. Technical/vocational schools previously supported by (public) companies were devolved to the Ministry, thus putting additional pressure on the government budget for initial VET. The industry's contribution to training is restricted to providing (unsystematic) practical training to students enrolled in technical/vocational schools. In the coming years, it would be unlikely to expect a strong contribution of industry to initial training, but as in other EU countries, initiatives could be taken to revive apprenticeship in the crafts sector and in those sectors (for instance tourism) where work and training places can most easily be available.

The contribution of the private sector to apprenticeship training can take other forms than purely financial contributions. The time and expertise of industry specialists are also helpful in the process of curriculum design, in establishing appropriate assessment procedures and in providing adequate supervision of training.

3.2 Setting up tax exemption schemes to encourage employers to invest in VET

3.2.1. INITIAL VET

In many countries, employers are unwilling to provide adequate investment in training because they do not see the benefits of such an investment, or because they prefer relying on a qualified workforce trained at government expense in technical/vocational schools, or because they fear "poaching", that is seeing the apprentices, once trained at their own expense, leave for another company.

This situation prompts governments to intervene to guarantee a minimum level of employer investment in training. This is usually done by means of a compulsory payroll tax imposed by governments on companies which are however exempted from paying the tax if they can prove that they have spent an equivalent amount on training. Companies can choose to develop their own training schemes or to pay for training from public or private providers.

The French apprenticeship tax (taxe d'apprentissage), established in 1925, is probably among the oldest scheme of this kind. The present rate is 0.5% of the payroll, to be paid by all companies except by those which employ apprentices on a regular contract. The funds raised through the tax are used to finance not only the apprenticeship training centres run by the Chambers and other bodies, but also the technical/vocational schools of the Ministry, because companies can make direct contributions to those schools rather than pay the tax. In other words, the proceeds of the tax are used for other purposes than apprenticeship training which still lacks appropriate resources for its development. In 1993, the funds raised through the apprenticeship tax accounted for about 40% of the total cost of apprenticeship.

The Danish AER fund (Employers' Reimbursement System), set up in 1977, functions along similar lines. All employers with more than one employee are liable for contributions to the AER, based on the number of employees. The funds thus raised are used to offer financial support to employers who set up apprenticeships in the framework of an apprenticeship contract and to reimburse them for wages paid to trainees during their school periods. The AER is a self-supporting institution managed by a Board made up of representatives of social partners.

Back in the sixties, the United Kingdom used to rely on a levy grant system organized along similar lines. The Industrial Training Act of 1964 represented positive intervention by the government, once it had become clear that voluntary efforts by employers would not suffice in guaranteeing an adequate level of training. The Act set up tripartite Training Boards in 26 industries with representatives of employers, trade unions and education. The ITBs, as they were called, were empowered to raise financial levies from employers, ranging from 0.2% to 2.5% of the payroll, to help meet the training costs of the industry. The grants were used to finance apprenticeship training organized by the Boards or by the companies themselves through the Boards. The aims of the British scheme were to ensure an adequate supply of training at all levels, to improve the quality of training and to share the costs of training among employers, thereby solving the problem of "poaching." This last point was very sensitive in the British context where the scheme was envisaged as a redistributive mechanism that would enable companies that underinvest in training to make a contribution towards the costs of those who did.

During the eight years following the setting up of the ITBs a considerable amount of training activity was generated by the Boards and apprenticeship training was upgraded and improved in many industries. But in 1973 the scheme was weakened by the decision to exempt small companies and those providing training from paying the levy. Thus, the levy-grant scheme was converted into a levy-exemption scheme. By the end of the 1970s, various factors led to a dramatic decline in apprenticeship training. It was too long (four years) and costly; it was confined to traditional, declining industries and did not cater to the needs for new skills; and, lastly, it did not provide an appropriate policy response to growing unemployment (HAXBY 1987). In 1981, 16 ITBs were abolished and the remaining was limited to a maximum levy of 1% of payroll. Some ITBs continue to operate very successfully, however, most notably in the construction, engineering and travel and tourism industries.

On the whole, tax-exemption schemes set up to finance initial VET have been successful. They have contributed to mobilising private financing for VET, thus increasing overall VET provision. Moreover, employer or social partner organisations have been greatly involved in the management of the schemes, thus ensuring that the funds have been spent effectively, and the awareness of the importance of training has increased significantly among employers.

But the British example show that these schemes greatly depend on the good health of industry. Introducing a new tax in sectors faced with difficulties may cause further decline in short-term competitiveness. The functioning of the scheme has to be kept as flexible as possible to adapt to a changing environment.

3.2.2. CONTINUING TRAINING

Tax-exemption schemes are also extensively used to finance continuing training of employed people. In addition to the amount of private finance for training they generate, they are credited with a positive impact on the development of training facilities within companies and on the creation of a market for continuing training involving a wide range of suppliers.

In Denmark, the training of both the employed and the unemployed is organized through the AMU training system established by the Ministry of Labour. Before 1983, AMU was fully financed from government funds. Since then, government financing has been replaced by a compulsory levy on all wage-earners and employers and a special fund (AUD-fund) was established. This fund, governed by social partners, provides grants for the financing of both employees and the unemployed.

In Spain, a tripartite, national agreement on continuing training was signed by the government and the social partners in 1992. The agreement is financed by a compulsory levy of 0.70% of each worker's wages, of which 0.60% is paid by the employer and 0.10% by the employee. A Foundation (FORCEM), managed by the social partners, was established to screen, approve and finance the training plans submitted by companies, as well as individual training leaves granted to employees.

In France, the 1971 law, confirming what had been previously agreed upon by social partners, set up a continuing training tax to be paid by all private companies which employ at least 10 persons. The rate was initially set at 0.8% of the payroll, but was subsequently increased to 1.5%. In 1991, the tax obligation was extended to smaller companies at a lower rate of 0.15% of the payroll. The funds are collected by 85 Training Funds, some of which are industry-based, others established at the regional, district or company level. Companies are exempted from the tax if they can prove that they have spent an equivalent amount on the training of their own staff or sent their contribution to a collecting body.

The main effect of these schemes has been to increase, sometimes dramatically, the amount of money spent by companies on continuing education and the number of participants in training programmes. In Spain, the number of approved company training plans grew from 750 in 1993, the first year of operation, to 2,500 in 1995. The number of employees benefiting from these training programmes increased accordingly, from less than 5% to 17%. In France, the employers' contributions to continuing training have always been above the legal obligation since 1972. The share of the payroll assigned to training almost tripled from 1.35% in 1972 to 3.33% in 1994. The data also show that the training effort is unequally distributed. Large companies invest more than small ones and the overall effort differs widely among economic sectors.

There is no doubt that tax-exemption schemes are effective in mobilising private resources for continuing training. In France, it is estimated that almost half (44% in 1992) of the total spending for continuing spending is borne by companies (CEREQ 1995). This is an area where co-financing between the state and industry has now become commonplace.

In addition to greater provision of continuing training in general, and more specifically of company-financed training, these schemes have also provoked a boom in the supply of training, which has become a very competitive market, geared to labour market needs. Training providers, public and private, have mushroomed, while in-house training facilities have been set up in certain companies. Many of them have created training units and appointed training managers, sometimes incorporated in the staff development structure at company level. In France, nearly all companies with more than 1,000 employees report having a training plan. Employers, especially in large companies, are encouraged to take an active stand on human resource development in their companies.

Still, much remains to be done to change the attitudes of employers towards continuing training. Many of them view "decisions on training expenditure as reactive to events such as recruitment, acquisition, new technology or a plan to improve product quality. As a result training expenditure is not seen as an investment expected to lead to an identifiable income source, but rather more as an overhead which can, like building maintenance, be reduced when times are hard" (Combating Complacency Report, November 1985). Incorporating continuing training strategies as part of an investment strategy designed to improve the quality of products and/or the competitiveness of the company is the challenge ahead.

4. CONCLUSION

How far the innovations in the financing of VET reviewed above can be of interest to Central/Eastern European countries is open to question. Recent trends in those countries can be characterised as follows:

☐ Firstly, many schools or training centres, previously run and financed by large public companies, were devolved to the state (one ministry or another), thus creating an additional burden on state financing. Reliance on one single source of public finance has contributed to a weakening of publicly-financed VET.

☐ Secondly, there has been a vigorous decentralisation process, granting VET schools full administrative autonomy. Public funds were usually allocated by setting normative per capita funding rules which have led to a strong increase in provision and, in some countries, to over-capacity.

☐ Thirdly, the above-mentioned funding procedures have contributed significantly to an increase in the number of private schools, thus leading to co-financing between the state (to the extent that these schools remain totally or partially subsidised) and trainees who are charged tuition fees. How far public funds have been saved, however, depends on whether or not private schools keep receiving public subsidies from the state.

☐ Fourthly, the importance of continuing training has gradually been acknowledged, but few steps, if any, have been taken to introduce effective financing mechanisms along lines similar to what already exist in some EU countries. As a result, the contribution of industry to continuing training is believed to be very small.

These trends, which seem to owe a lot to the political and social context of the time, do not match easily with the innovations observed in EU countries which have been briefly described in this paper. The only one that is common to both groups of countries is the trend towards decentralisation and regional or institutional autonomy. And even there, the story has not ended. More changes will take place as more solid and systematic information becomes available on the effects and the viability of the new financing schemes adopted here and there.

INVOLVEMENT OF SOCIAL PARTNERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Jean-Marie LUTTRINGER

1. SOCIAL DIALOGUE ON TRAINING WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. In almost all the European Union member countries, social dialogue on the subject of training is a reality. It does, however, express itself in a variety of forms. The key issues are well known. How to organize access to training for everyone during the entire life of a person? How to finance it and how to recognize the acquired skills?

   The issue raise a large number of legal, financial and organizational questions, for which the European Union member countries find solutions that derive from their own culture. The diversity of the legal and organizational solutions is a function of the centralized or decentralized organization of the State, of the power of the employees´trade union organizations, of the degree of autonomy of the social partners vis à vis the State, and of the borders and links between initial and continuing training ... However, in a great majority of countries, an active involvement of the social partner in this area is deemed necessary, whether at company level, professional branch level or interprofessional level.

2. Social dialogue on the subject of VET is also established at the level of the European Union. Through the Rome treaty and the Maastricht treaty, the European social partners have effectively covered the ground which stretches between simple recognition and the institutionalization of their role.

   In the meantime, the European social partners have won the right to sit on the committees of several European consulting bodies, and taken part in experimental exchanges and negotiations at community level, which has resulted in, on the one hand, the common opinions elaborated in about framework of the social dialogue and on the other hand, the agreement of October 31, 1991 about the future of the community´s social policy, which figures in the social Protocole appendix of the European Union Treaty.

   The actors in this dialogue recognized by the UNICE (Union of Industrial and Employers´confederations of Europe), the CEEP (European Centre of Enterprises with public Participation) and the ETUC (European Trade Union confédération).

   Seven "Common opinions" on the subjects education and training were decided upon the social partners. Sectoral social dialogue also tackled this issue (retail trade and industrial cleaning).

   The common opinions on education and training deal with the following subjects:

☐ basic education, initial training and vocational training of adults (1990)
☐ the transition between school and adult and professional life (1990)
☐ the methods likely to give the broadest possible effective access to training (1991)
☐ professional qualifications and their validation (1992)
☐ women and training (1993)
☐ the future actions of the European Union in the field of vocational training and the function of social partners in this field (1994)
☐ the contribution of vocational training on the fight against unemployment (1995)

3. In 1996/97, the members of European social dialogue have decided to deepen 4 issues with a view to resulting in new common opinions or other modalities of social dialogue that may lead to negotiation. These issues are as follows: lifelong training, career guidance for young and adults, qualification including forecast and analysis of needs, recognition, validation and transparency of qualifications, allocations of resources: financing, co-responsibility and co-investment.

2. SOCIAL DIALOGUE ON TRAINING IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

1. The starting positions of the eastern and central European countries, from which to reach the same degree of social partner involvement of vocational training as in the EU member States, are radically differeht. First of all, the very existence and representativity of social partners poses a problem in the current transition phase towards a market economy. When they do exist, their autonomy vis à vis the State is not always guaranteed. Their ability to deal with the issues relating to vocational training cannot always be taken for granted and presupposes a technical and specific culture, while other issues deemed more urgent are on the agenda (job, purchasing power, welfare protection.). The technical co-operation programs relating to training have not always given social dialogue the importance its strategic significance warrants.

2. The emergence of social partnership is taking place in an unfavourable context of economic crisis and structural transformation.

The constant development of social differentiation leads to the development of a more diversified social structure and the appearance of a multitude of diversified interests. This has an important effect and provokes the relative lack of consolidation of the organizational structures of social partners.

The access to the highly competitive "market" of representation of interest is hardly regulated (absence of framework regulations on representativity).

In that context, the transition from an administered economy towards a market economy could not be carried out instantaneously, but corresponded to a more or less long and difficult transition process depending on the situation particular to each country. In such a transition phase the only certain or "stable" thing was the very principle of change and the speed at which it came about.

The risk of diversity in national responses, which the speed of these evolutions causes, must not be seen as a "problem". It is an inevitable reality which can be controlled when the solutions opted for an anchored in commonly-held values and principles. These principles are known as far as the role of social partners and social dialogue in a market economy are concerned: pluralism is a guarantee of efficacy and democracy, the autonomous players of civil society must be able to counterbalance the weight of the State. These principles apply to the role of social partners on the subject of vocational training.

3. However, one has to point out the difficulty encountered by employers´organizations and employees´ trade unions in forming autonomous forces, which are representative, and possess clear skills and the ability to assume them, particularly in the field of VET. The process by which employers´ and workers´ organizations are formed is not the same, and does not encounter the same hurdles in both cases.

4. By definition, employers´ groups did not exist in the former social organization. In the new market economy context they must therefore be "invented". The task is not an easy one, though. The problems to be resolved are economic and organizational. The number of private employers depend on the progress made in the State - owned company privatization process, but also on the creation of new private concerns. However, even in the countries where the private sector is developing, employers´organizations are not yet enjoying the desire representativity. Small employers are devoting their energy to the running of their firms and the competition in the market place, and are not very available for the tasks of general regulation of the labour market and training within employers´organizations.

As for the directors of state concerns, of which there are still many, their independence from the state and the union organizations in the company is too weak fro them to play a decisive role in autonomous employers´organizations.

For lack of autonomous and representative employers´organizations, some countries have chosen to make belonging to chambers of commerce compulsory for employers, and to give them prerogatives on the subject of VET.

This choice, dictated by the imperatives of the transition phase, seems not to be, however, in conformity with the orientations of the International Labour Organization.

5. As for the employees´ trade unions, the problem is not one of "inventing" them but changing them, of political action towards economic and social action and the question of their representativity. It must be noted that there has been a considerable increase in the number of trade unions at different levels due to the creation of new one or to the splitting of existing ones. The rate of union membership is tending to drop, though it remains high in the state sector. In the private sector, especially in small companies, their influence is very weak. The same applies to large private foreign capital businesses.

   Only the existence of private sector employers´organizations may give meaning to the economic and social action of the employees´ trade unions and lead to their grouping together and representativity in their respective professional sectors.

6. With respect to this situation, the question was raised whether, confronted with the urgency of the reforms to be undertaken in the field of VET, it was worth waiting for the social partners to be created and capable of solving the problems that exist, or whether it would not be better to carry out the reforms without them. A serious question, to which the reply came that necessity knows no law, but that vocational training was an excellent area in which social partners - if their legal competence was recognized and technical competence supported - could very well learn both social dialogue and facilitate the training reforms within tripartite bodies.

7. Tripartism is the emerging form of social regulation in the current transition phase in the partner countries. When the social partners lack autonomy, social dialogue is organized with three parties, under the aegis of the State.

   The VET reform finds a favourable environment in such bodies, as the State is and remains in any event a key player in this field, which in no country is entirely in private hands. Most of the participants mentioned the creation, either some time ago or more recently, of tripartite social dialogue bodies concerned with training. The question of the representativity of social partners, mentioned above, remains even tough it is not such a burning issue. What is more, the risk of increased State-control is present, as well as the sensitivity of tripartite bodies to political ups and downs rather than the economic or social one.

3. ISSUES FOR THE DEBATE

3.1 General issues

1. In a market economy, neither the State alone, nor the suppliers and people who ask for training can ensure the tasks that derive from the good functioning of vocational training systems.

2. The involvement of social partners may exist within "tripartite" bodies jointly created with the public authorities.

   This modality is widespread but it is not exclusive.

   The self involvement of social partners often through collective bargaining or other forms of social dialogue at all levels (national, branch, enterprise) is to be hoped.

3. The "natural skill" of social partners to determine rules and priorities must be integrated into labour law to be real and effective.

   Therefore, the law of collective bargaining must provide for disposals dealing with that issue as well as the law of collective bargaining must provide for disposals dealing with that issue as well se the law of collective representation of workers within the enterprises.

4. The social dialogue on CVT between the social partners can be effective at various levels: national intersectoral level, branch, enterprise.

   The national intersectoral level, if it is adequate with the labour relations that exist in the national culture can allow to define a place for self involvement of social partners towards the State and to give references for other levels of negotiation. However it is not prior to branch or enterprise negotiation which can derive from a framework law on training or incentives from tripartite bodies.

5. Social dialogue in an enterprise does not necessarily takes the form of collective bargaining with regard to the legal meaning of that word.

   It exists through concertation with representatives of workers (work councils, shop stewards...) On the planning of training, on the target measures, on alternance training ...

   In that case, the decision comes under the responsibility of the employer or is co-decided.

6. Social dialogue on CVT is widely dependant on the financing techniques.

   Once the financement is ensured though state budget, "tripartism" will exist. But if the enterprises pay taxes and contributions devoted to training on the basis of their wage bill, the self intervention of social partners becomes justified.

   The determination of resources, their management are therefore matters of social dialogue. The existence of non-State resources shapes the social dialogue on CVT.

   The contribution of the workers themselves to the financement of their training (co-investment), token as it may be, gives even more importance to the role of the social partners in that field.

7. The frontier between initial vocational training and CVT is not always easily determinated nor is the intervention of social dialogue.

   The national answers are very diversified. The main concern is to view vocational training like a lifelong process. In that respect, social dialogue that exists is likely to be extended to initial vocational training.

8. Training supply is not naturally an issue in the negotiation. It is up to the private or public professionals to design and market the most appropriate training means. However, the social partners, if they have a power to guide access to training for the individuals or to recognize qualifications may play a role in the structuration of the training offer.

   It is therefore of a greater importance to let the training market develop outside the sphere of the social partners by taking into account the rules deriving from the social dialogue.

9. Vocational training is both a tool for employment policies and a part of the personal development of the individuals. Social dialogue may deal only with the first point or on both points. However, the rules may be different in the two contexts (access, financement, recognition).

10. The management of the recognition of skills acquired though training or professional experience lies within the core of the competences of social partners.

    The level of qualification which is recognized has a strong influence on the wages which are the core of every collective bargaining.

    If vocational training becomes continuing training and keeps running lifelong, qualification can no longer be measured or assessed by diplomas given at the end of initial training. It is the role of the social partners to negotiate validation and recognition procedures for skills acquired though training or experience.

3.2 The role of social partners at the level of enterprises

a) "Joint Opinions"

The extracts from Joint opinions below present the current "doctrine" of European social partners on the issue on social dialogue on training at the level of enterprises. They are a key starting point for the debate in the countries of eastern and central Europe.

The responsibility of the enterprise

J. O. 19/6/90-5

Vocational training to meet the firm throughout a person´s working life is the shared responsibility of employer and employee. If this is to be effective, company and individual needs must be clearly identified and planned in training plans or programs appropriate to the size of the firms and drawn up in the framework of the firm´s overall strategy, to enhance his skills and assist him or her to adapt to changes in job.

J. O. 19/06/90-11

The participants call for every step to be taken to facilitate the broadest possible access to training opportunities. The practical arrangements for such access will have to be specified according to the relevant circumstances.

Continuing vocational training decided on by firms in the light of their needs should be financed by employers. The full cost of this training carried out either within firms or outside should be deductible for tax purposes.

Without prejudice to existing agreements and practices, the arrangements for employees to be granted time off for training purposes should, if the parties consider it appropriate, be the subject of an agreement between the employer and the employee and/or his or her representatives in the framework of national legislations and practices.

J. O. 20/12/91-22

Certification and recognition of training undertaken - In view of the importance for workers of being in possession of some generally recognized form of qualification, certificates relating to vocational training schemes undertaken for reasons of personal development, se well as their recognition in the labour market, are of particular importance for effective geographical and occupational mobility. The participants recommend that request from employees to be allowed time off during working hours to take examinations leading to certificates, diplomas or the assessment of skills, offered by bodies recognized by the State or by the relevant sector, be examined favourably.

Information and Consultation in the Enterprise

J. O. 6/3/87-B1 and following

1 - To clarify what follows "Information and Consultation" mus be understood as applying to workers and/or their representatives, in accordance with the laws, collective agreements and practices in force in the countries of the Community.

4 - The participants note that, in most countries of the Community and also in many industrial sectors, there exist various forms of information and consultation procedures and negotiating practices. Whilst acknowledging the diversity of the existing procedure.

5 - Both sides take the view that when technological changes which imply major consequences for the workforce are introduced in a firm, workers and/or their representatives should be informed and consulted in accordance with the laws, agreements

and practices in force in the Community countries. This information and consultation mus be timely. (...)

In order to improve understanding of the new technologies, promote the acquisition of new skills and enhance adaptability, both sides express the wish that appropriate training for both employers and workers be developed.

J. O. 19/6/90-7

Information and consultation of employees and their representatives undertaken by employers, in accordance with national laws and practices, on training programmes put into effect by the firm would help to increase the motivation of the work force by improving their understanding of the changes facing the firm.

J. O. 10/1/91-2

To this and, the participants underline the importance and value of a constructive dialogue.

This dialogue assumes that the social partners are able to manage change; that implies negotiations at appropriate levels to adapt, if necessary, existing agreements or, if necessary, to conclude new ones.

They recall the importance at company level of timely information and consultation of the workforce and/or its representatives, as stated in the Joint Opinion of 6 March 1987 particulary when defining the objectives of adaptability to attain if a balance can be struck between the needs of the various parties concerned, both within the firm and outside.

Vocational guidance – role of employers and trade unions

J. O. 5/4/91-2.8.

Employers and trade unions can help to promote effective vocational guidance services be contributing their experience and expertise to develop teaching and information material and by visiting schools to talk to young people about their activities.

Firms can contribute by making available short work experience assignments to enable vocational guidance counselors, teachers and pupils to acquire firs-hand experience of industry and commerce.

Additional assistance can be made available by the participation of management and trade union representatives in the national, regional and local committees involved in the organization and coordination of vocational guidance services.

J. O. 5.4/912.9

On the basis of guidelines drawn up at the appropriate level, the following practical arrangements could promote such cooperation:

☐ visits to firms of guidance specialists
☐ the twinning of schools with firms
☐ work-experience placement for teachers

☐ an introduction for pupils to the word of work through training courses and visits
☐ pupil visits to vocational schools and distance/correspondence-learning institutions

J. O. 5/4/91-4.4
In the period where young people take their decisions on their future careers, such links can help the young person´s decision process.

J. O. 5/4/91-4.5
Work-experience periods in companies for this purpose should be short and form part of the counselling process.

School-enterprise Cooperation

J. O. 19/6/90-4a
0The participants consider that in addition to their functions of providing broad general education and basic training for life in society, all the parties should contribute in such a way that school take greater account of the realities of working life. Close links between firms and education establishments should be encouraged so as to promote the more effective integration of young people into working life.

J. O. 19/6/90-4b
Increased efforts should be made to encourage teachers and instructirs to take part in exchance schemes and practical training, to familiarize teachers with the lates developments put into effect in firms and new technologies, and to develop the theoretical training and teaching skills of instructors in firms.

J. O. 19/6/91-4.2
In general education, full responsibility lies in the hands of the school authorities. However, within the framework of basic guidelines guaranteeing the autonomy of the school, the school authorities should develop more contacts between schools a firms. The social partners can at European level encourage companies to provide further opportunities for visits, to organize training for teachers in companies, and other types of cooperation.

J. O. 5/4/91-4.3
The transition from education to the word of work is made more easily and effectively when young people are in a position to understand better the opportunities offeren in enterprises of all sizes. Employers and unions or workers´representatives play an active role in this field.

Employers help young people to understand more clearly how, on commencing salaried or freelance work, they can contribute to creating wealth and improving the standards of living of the community in which they live.

Employers can also help to give young people an introduction to enterprise and knowledge concerning the economy.

In various Member States they have already taken a number of successful initiatives to improve cooperation between education services and enterprises which provide vocational training.

Unions or workers´representatives help young people by informing them and advising them on their rights within the company, the advantages of vocational training, and also help them to identify their own interest by integrating them in the process of information, consultation and participation in the area of training.

J. O. 6/3/87-5

Information and consulation of the workforce or, depending on national practice, of its representatives, on training programmes carried out by the undertaking, would help to increase employees´motivation by improving their understanding of the changes facing the firms.

J. O. 28/07/93-3.2.1

In general education, "the school authorities should develop more contacts between schools and firms."

J. O. 28/07/93-3-2.1. -§6

These should be a more marked development of relations between enterprise and universities/research centres, and of university-enterprise partnerships designed inter alia to bring occupational qualifications into line with the needs of industrial and technological progress. These links between school/university and enterprise, between education and the world of work, should be deveplopped through:

☐ community programmes
☐ changes in educational counselling and guidance
☐ direct involvement of the Social Partners with those responsible for educational systems and with the structures themselves

b) Issue for the Debate on the Place of Enterprises

1. Enterprises have a key role to play in favour of the development of vocational training:

    ☐ through the integration of trainnes, their training and professional guidance
    ☐ alternance training through the use of enterprises´resources (equipment, tutors)
    ☐ training of its employees through the financing of a part of the collected needs

2. The responsibility of the enterprise is different whether it is a big or a small enterprise - for big firms, training can be integrated into a specific process of planification and be a part of labor organisation

    ☐ for small enterprises, training is often an externalized task which is given to "providers of services" in connection with social partners and those providers coming from the training market

3. Training is first a key decision which lies under the responsibility of the managers of the enterprises. However, the practices in EU members States show that social dialogue, on its diversity, is a good way to tackle the problems dealing with the monitoring of training policy by enterprises.

4. Social dialogue on vocational training within the enterprises can deal with the following issues:

   - priorities in connection with market, technology etc
   - allocated resources (investment and co-investment)
   - the forms: link with the labor organization, usual training
   - access to training for employees (their rights-obligations)
   - connection between the enterprise and its surrounding (external services for SMEs, training offer, employment and training data on the local level...)

5. The forms of social dialogue can be very formal -collective bargaining, proceedings of a work council- or be more informal, in order to tackle a specific problem (new technologies, restructurations...).

6. "Tripartism" is a form of social dialogue which is suited to the situation at the national or regional level. On the contrary, it is not relevant at the level of private firms, in which the State, naturally, has no more direct influence.

7. Social dialogue on training in enterprises becomes all the more strategic than competitiveness of enterprises on a competitive market is widely influenced by the qualification of the workforce and its motivation. Therefore, social regulation moves from the ground of wage and employment (which remain essential) to the ground of skill and qualifications for which training is an essential means.

ANNEXES

Annex 1

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PHARE VET REFORM PROGRAMME IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

BACKGROUND

The urgent need after 1989 to adjust Vocational Education and Training (VET) in apprentice schools and technical secondary schools to reflect the changing economic and social circumstances resulted in the launch of a major strategic review of VET with the aim to map all major aspects of the system and through consensus to formulate long and short term strategic steps to be taken.

Following the conclusions from the Review the programme VET Reform Through Pilot Schools was initiated and in 1994 the Financing Memorandum for the programme was signed by representatives of the Czech Government and the European Union.

In February/March 1996 the aim of the programme was confirmed once more at a Strategic Workshop with key persons and decision makers representing four ministries, research institutions, educational institutions, schools, the EU-Delegation, the European Training Foundation and the PMU. At this workshop the Strategic Plan for the programme was discussed and agreed, stating aims and objectives for each programme component.

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

The objective of the programme is to contribute to long-term VET Reform, as a key element of education, and in support of the economic reform process. The VET Reform is to be implemented through pilot schools with national support for curriculum development and teacher training in these schools. The outcome will be a refined national policy statement and national approach to implementation of recommendations – with appropriate modifications.

In practice the programme aims to set the process of the transformation of the VET system in motion through organisation of support mechanisms to the policy level as well as to the school level. At central level the support is focused on the development of a coherent and transparent reform, including new curriculum development methodology and studies on related revised management, financing and quality control. At this level the programme involves actively the main key actors from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Finance, research institutes for education and representatives of social partners and schools. Activities at school level are based on the selection of 19 pilot schools for implementation of pilot curricula, pilot management courses, teacher training courses and school partnerships with schools from other European countries.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The European Training Foundation is responsible for the overall management and co-ordination of the programme on behalf of the European Commission. The programme is managed by the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports who appoints a Steering Committee to supervise the programme and provide the strategic direction. The Steering Committee is supported by the Advisory Task Force who represents the educational community and the labour market. The daily administration of the programme is undertaken by the Project Management Unit (PMU) placed under the National Training Fund. The technical assistance team is provided by Aalborg Technical College.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The programme is implemented over the period 1994 – 1998 and it involves 800 teachers and 15.000 students. A great number of Czech and international experts have co-operated in the programme and links have been established with educational institutions in the rest of Europe. The allocation of money for the programme was 4 MECU.

The programme was divided into six components:

School Development, including EU-partnerships

The implementation of the programme was from the beginning based on the active participation of 19 pilot schools who were selected to implement in practice the objectives of the programme components. In order to secure the link between practice and policy level the 19 pilot schools set up a co-ordination committee with the participation of all 19 headmasters. Through regular meetings the Co-ordination Committee discussed and improved the programme implementation while they at the same time developed and modernised the management of their own school. The whole committee had discussions with relevant ministry representatives, with evaluators working under the evaluation component and with the programme management bodies. The head of the Co-ordination Committee participated in the Advisory Task Force and the Steering Committee meetings which was yet another link between school level and policy level. The on-going dialogue during the project implementation period added considerably to the value and relevance of the programme.

During the implementation of the components several teachers from the pilot schools worked with the PMU to plan and implement teacher training, curriculum development, equipment procurement and learning materials development.

A separate objective for this component was the establishment of school partnerships between the pilot schools and EU-schools. These partnerships have been agreed and described and are under implementation. The aim of each partnership is to improve school performance in areas seen as most needed by the pilot schools. Projects include a range of topics from improving school management and co-operating with social partners to introducing new teaching methodologies. Several of the partnership projects are accepted by the Leonardo programme or are applying for extended support to successful projects.

Curriculum development, assessment and examination

This component has focused on the development of a new curriculum methodology and on the development of new curricula in the following 12 vocational clusters: Agriculture, Ceramics, Chemistry, Civil Engineering, Economics, Electrotechnics, Glass, Hotel and Catering, Mechanical Engineering Services, Textile and Trade. Curricula were developed for the secondary apprentice courses as well as for the secondary technical courses.

The programme has co-operated very closely with the Research Institute of Technical and Vocational Education (VÚOŠ) who designed the new curriculum development methodology, that places part of the responsibility for curriculum development at the schools taking a decentralised approach to curriculum development allowing for more flexibility and adaptability to local conditions. In the new methodology the educational standards and the framework for broad vocational courses are defined by the Ministry while the more detailed content of the curriculum is left to the individual schools. In order to achieve this all 19 pilot schools established curriculum working groups who worked in close collaboration with VÚOŠ and succeeded in designing new and more broadly based curricula for the 12 selected clusters. VÚOŠ coached the curriculum development groups of pilot school teachers, monitored and evaluated the implementation. In the delivery of the curricula the pilot schools have been using new teaching and assessment methods.

School management and teacher upgrading through in-service training

In the frame of the programme several different staff training activities have been implemented to train the pilot school teachers and managers. Czech and foreign educational institutions have in close co-operation developed new training programmes for in-service training of vocational teachers. The training programmes have been organised as seminars in the Czech Republic and study tours to EU-countries. The main training courses provided training in modern school management, new teaching methodology and foreign language teaching. App. 300 teachers and managers have participated in the various training programmes. One of the outputs is training packages replicable in future courses for non-pilot school teachers with support of the Czech educational institutions and the participants trained during the programmes as teacher trainers.

All the training activities were planned in order to meet the most urgent needs for up-dating of teacher and manager competencies. They are supplemented by the participation by the teachers and managers in the programme through their activities in the Co-ordination Committee, working groups and the partnership activities with European schools.

Development of new learning materials

This component aimed at the development of new learning materials to support the delivery of the new curricula. The needs for new materials were analysed by VÚOŠ and resulted in two types of learning materials that are under development in the programme also supported by experts from VÚOŠ. The first group, including 25 titles altogether, have been developed by the pilot school staff on the basis of their current needs in relation to the delivery of the new curricula in individual subjects. The second group concerns 5 titles in the following areas: Aesthetics, civics, environmental studies, introduction to the world of work and key skills. The 5 titles were identified as a need in general for several schools. Experts from the 5 fields are the authors of these titles.

Upgrading of pilot school equipment

During the programme the pilot schools received new equipment for classrooms and workshops. Priority was given to the purchase of equipment necessary for the new curricula in the 12 vocational clusters. The equipment included hardware and software for computers and other new technologies. Pilot school teachers were involved as equipment experts in their specialised fields and assisted the PMU in the identification of equipment needs, drafting of specifications and evaluation of tenders.

Evaluation

The pilot school experience together with the existing VET system and relevant EU and OECD reviews and experience, have been analysed during 1996/1997 by more than 50 Czech and 10 international experts in eight main problem areas. Reports from the eight groups were widely discussed and summarised into three synthetic papers. In the final stage a draft policy paper was worked out, discussed at a national seminar and prepared for the international conference in October 1997.

As part of the preparation of the policy paper a Study Programme on VET systems was implemented with seminars in the Czech Republic and study tours to Ireland and Finland. Participants were members of ATF and the heads of the 8 evaluation groups mentioned above.

FINANCING

The VET Reform Programme was fully committed by 31 December 1996 with a total amount of 4,070,000 ECU contracted during the programme period. The programme is divided into seven sub-projects and the final allocation of money among these is as follows:

Management	1,069,167
School Development	402,327
Curriculum Development	538,002
School Staff Training	645,111
Learning materials	245,000
Equipment	946,123
Evaluation	224,270
TOTAL	4,070,000

PROGRAMME OUTCOME

For each of the components described above different outcomes were achieved that may be disseminated and contribute to modernisation of Czech VET schools throughout the system.

A key outcome of the programme is the policy paper, including analyses of key areas in the education system and followed by recommendations regarding future steps in the transformation process. Another significant outcome is the successful establishment of co-operation across institutions and securing an open and transparent exchange of information and results. Mechanisms and bodies established in the programme may be transformed to serve the whole VET sector.

Annex 2

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CE 077107

European Training Foundation

Villa Gualino,
viale Settimio Severo, 65
I-10133 Torino

Tel: +39. (0)11. 630.22.22
Fax: +39. (0)11. 630.22.00
email: info@etf.eu.int
Web: http://www.etf.eu.int

Steve Chambers
Acquisitions Coordinator
ERIC/ACVE
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus OH 43210
USA

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